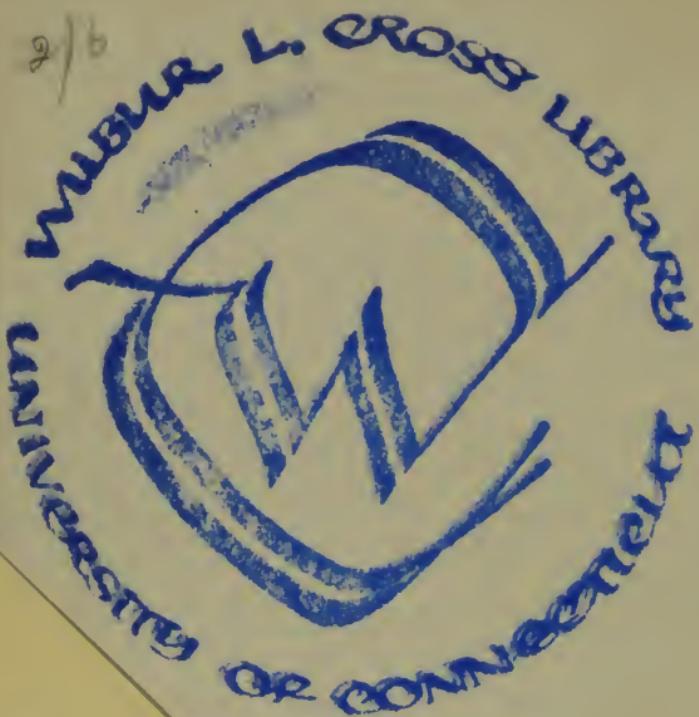




SQUIB AND
HIS
FRIENDS





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SQUIB AND HIS FRIENDS.



"Squib flung himself upon the dog, and threw his arms about his neck."

SQUIB AND HIS
FRIENDS  BY E.
EVERETT-GREEN

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SQUIB AND HIS FRIENDS.

CHAPTER I.

“THE ODD ONE.”

THAT was the name Squib went by in the nursery and in the household—“the odd one.” Not exactly because of any personal peculiarities—although he had a few of these—but because he had no especial brother or sister belonging to him, and seemed to stand alone, whilst all the others could be paired off together.

Norman and Frank were big boys, away at school most of the year, near to each other in age, and always together in the holidays. Philippa and Molly came next, and were girls, devoted to each other and to their family of dolls, and even more devoted to the live dolls in the nursery—the little twin sisters, Hilda and Hulda, whom nobody knew apart save themselves and the nurse. But Squib had no brother or sister to be bracketed with him. The baby who came next in age to him had died in infancy, and was only

a dim memory to the brother just above him in age. So he had always been, as it were, "the odd one" of the family, although his sisters were very fond of him, and never refused him a share in their games when he wanted to join in them.

But Squib did not care for dolls, and his tastes lay amongst things beyond the walls of nursery or schoolroom. He wanted always to be out of doors when not busy with his lessons for Mademoiselle (for so far he had not gone to school, but had been taught with his sisters in the schoolroom); and his pursuits were not of a kind to be attractive to the dainty little ladies, Philippa and Molly, or to find favour in the eyes of nurse, who reigned supreme over Hilda and Hulda. So Squib got into the way of amusing himself in his own fashion, and took his name of "the odd one" with great equanimity.

Squib was not his real name, as I suppose I need hardly say; it was a nickname given him by his father some years before my story begins, and it had stuck to him ever since. His real name was Sydenham, and he had been called Syd for a time, till Colonel Rutland had hit upon this other appellation.

And the reason for this was a habit of Squib's which amused his father a good deal. The child had a way of sitting perfectly still and silent for a very long time in the room, not speaking, even when spoken to, until some exhaustive mental process had taken place, after which he would suddenly "go off,"

as his father expressed it, and talk rapidly and eagerly for several minutes straight on end; then having thus relieved his mind and delivered himself of his thoughts, he would relapse into dead silence until ready for the next explosion. And so his father called him "Squib;" and Squib he became in time to the whole household.

It was commonly whispered about the place that Squib was the Colonel's favourite amongst his children. Colonel Rutland was not a man who had taken a great deal of notice of his sons and daughters as they appeared upon the scene. He was a busy man, having a large estate to order, being a magistrate, churchwarden, and guardian of the poor-law, and having social duties to attend to as well. He was a most devoted husband; and people used to say that never was there a happier couple than he and Lady Mary, his beautiful wife. He was proud of his fine young family in the aggregate, but did not notice the children very much individually, until one or two small incidents brought Squib before his eyes.

The first of these was a severe altercation which he chanced to overhear between the child and his nurse when Squib was five years old. He was walking through the shrubberies one morning when the sound of raised voices attracted his attention, the first being that of a child lifted in indignant protest.

"It's not a lie. I never tell lies! I *did* hear father sing it his own self!"

"Master Syd, that's not true. Your father never would sing such a wicked song. It only makes it worse, telling stories about it!"

"It isn't a story!—it isn't, I tell you! I heard him my own self, and lots of other people heard him, too. It's you who are wicked, saying I tell lies and father sings wicked songs!" and the crunch of the gravel betrayed the fact that Squib had brought his small foot heavily down upon it in a stamp of passionate wrath.

Colonel Rutland turned a corner and came full upon the combatants. The nurse—a most excellent and trustworthy woman, who had been for twelve years with them—was looking very grieved and disturbed as she held Squib by the hand, as if with the intention of taking him at once before some domestic tribunal; whilst the child's square, determined face was flushed a deep crimson, his dark-grey eyes looked almost black, as they had a way of doing in moments of passion and excitement, and his whole frame was quivering with anger and protest as he reiterated his assertion that he was speaking nothing but the truth.

"What is all this?" asked Colonel Rutland in a deep voice. "Squib, what do you mean by resisting your nurse like that? I will have no insubordination to authority in my house—you know that as well as I do." For Colonel Rutland, with his military training, was a martinet in his house about discipline, and his children knew perfectly that he would be more

severe over an act of disobedience than over any other kind of transgression.

Squib and the nurse both started at the sound of the Colonel's voice, and nurse dropped the hand she was holding and made a respectful courtesy to her master. Squib stood perfectly silent, after his fashion, for a full minute, and then burst into rapid speech,—

"I wasn't resisting her, father. She told me I was telling lies—and I'm not. You did sing it. I heard you; and it isn't wicked—and she didn't ought to say it was. I don't tell lies. I never did. It isn't lies—it's only about them!"

The Colonel held up his hand to command silence.

"What does all this mean?" he asked, turning to nurse.

"If you please, sir, I heard Master Syd singing something that didn't sound right for a young gentleman, and when I told him I wouldn't have wicked words sung, he turned and said that he'd heard you sing them, which I was quite sure was not true, and I told him so. And then he went off into one of his tantrums—which I hoped he was learning to get better of—and that's all I know about it. But I am quite sure he is not speaking the truth."

"Leave him to me and I will get at the rights of the matter," said the Colonel; and nurse, who had an ailing baby indoors (Squib's little brother who shortly afterwards died), was glad to go in to see

after him, leaving Squib and his father to settle things together about the song.

"Now, Squib," said Colonel Rutland, with grave severity of manner, "let me hear the whole truth of this from you. What is it you were singing? Don't be afraid to speak the truth."

"I'm not afraid a bit!" cried Squib, after his habitual pause. "I'll sing it to you now. You'll know it—it's your own song," and taking a deep breath and swelling himself out in unconscious imitation of a singer about to commence his song, the child broke out with the following words, sung in a deep voice as like that of a man as he could achieve—

"Five del dies—
The father of lies!"

And then suddenly breaking off he looked up at his father and cried,—

"You know you did sing it yourself, father—so it can't be wicked!"

The Colonel was puzzled. There was something in the rhythm of the notes that was familiar to him; but what could the child mean? How had he got hold of those absurd words, and what was in his head?

"When did you hear me sing it, Squib?" he asked, still not permitting his face to relax.

"Why, father—you know—when all those people came, and you read such a lot of funny things in

turn in the drawing-room and sang songs. There was another song about 'Ban, ban, Ca-Caliban'—you *must* remember; but it was you who sang about the father of lies, and it can't be wicked if you did it, though nurse does say so!"

Colonel Rutland broke into a sudden laugh. The whole thing flashed across him now. From time to time in that neighbourhood there were gatherings generally known by the name of "Shakespeare readings"—friends meeting together at one another's houses to read a play of the great dramatist's, the parts being allotted by previous arrangement. Not very long since "The Tempest" had been read in this way at Rutland Chase, and the children had been allowed to come into the room for part of it. It was just the kind of thing to fascinate Squib, and perhaps he had succeeded in hiding away and being up longer than was known. At any rate, he had evidently heard his father sing the well-known song—

"Full fathom five,
Thy father lies;"

and, with the capricious alchemy of a child's mind over anything not understood, had transformed it to the version which had aroused the ire of his nurse.

Something in this little incident tickled the fancy of the Colonel and attracted his attention towards Squib, who had always amused him when he had had time to notice his children; and the bond was more

closely drawn between them by two little incidents which occurred, one after the other, during the ensuing year.

The first of these had reference to a very fine Russian wolf-hound, which had been presented to Colonel Rutland a short time before. It was an animal almost as big as a calf, of a slate colour merging almost in black, with a head very broad across the brows, and a voice like a church bell. He was a very magnificent animal, but he had a fierce temper, and made few friends. Colonel Rutland was one of these few, but even he did not feel that he had the dog very well under control, and always took him out with a certain sense of misgiving.

One of the chief difficulties with regard to the creature was that he was so fierce when chained up that it was hardly safe to approach him, either to give him his food or to let him loose when the time for his daily run had arrived. Colonel Rutland was having a place made for him where he could be shut up without being chained, which he hoped would tend to the humanizing and taming of him ; but, meantime, he had to be fastened up in the yard when not at large, and Colonel Rutland made a point of both chaining and loosing him himself—although it was not without misgiving that he approached the great brute straining on his chain, and glaring out at the world with red, defiant eyes.

One day, as he was approaching the kennel, liking
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the looks of the dog rather less even than usual, he stood meditating at a short distance as to whether it were really safe to keep such a fierce animal on the premises, and whether he might not be running a foolish risk in going near him. He was startled by the sound of a small voice proceeding from an invisible questioner quite near at hand.

"Father," said the little voice, "shall I let Czar out for you?"

Colonel Rutland looked up, and looked down, and looked round about him, and again came the sound of the small voice, saying,—

"I'm in Czar's kennel, father."

The Colonel had certainly never thought of looking in such a place for the speaker. Now, turning his startled glance in that direction, he saw Squib sitting curled up on the clean straw in the huge kennel, looking out from his nest with a friendly smile.

For a moment the father's heart stood still. Suppose the great brute should turn and see him! It was with difficulty he commanded his voice to say quietly, whilst himself striving to attract the notice of the dog, "Come out, Squib; come very quietly."

But the child never heard the last words; he jumped up at once and made an outward bound, flinging himself upon the dog as he did so, and throwing his arms about his neck.

"Oh, father, if you would only let me have Czar to

go out with me sometimes! we should have such fun together!"

At the touch of those small childish hands the aspect of the dog changed at once. The lifted crest along his back smoothed down, the red light in his eyes changed altogether, the fierce bay ceased, for the creature was engaged in licking the child's hands and face, and in fondling him with evident delight. The father looked on in amaze, and when Squib repeated his question, "Shall I let him out now?" he gave his assent rather by sign than by word, so great was his surprise at what he saw.

"Oh, father, *may* I go with you?" pleaded Squib, with great, wistful eyes. "I've never been out with Czar yet—and I should so like to!"

His father held out a ready hand.

"Come along, my little man. We will go together. How came you and Czar to be such friends? I did not know he had made real friends with anybody yet."

Squib did not immediately answer; he was watching the gambols of the great dog careering round and round them in wide circles—a thing he had never done before when out with Colonel Rutland, always making a rush ahead, and only coming reluctantly to his side when called with authority. Whenever Squib held out his hand, Czar made a dash at him and licked it; and once the child jumped upon the great creature's back, and Czar took him for a breath-

less scamper across the park—Squib holding on like a little monkey; and only when he had come back and was holding his father's hand again did he “go off,” and enter into explanations of this strange friendship.

“ You see, father, it was like this—Czar had nobody to love him. They were all afraid of him. I saw coachman give him his supper one day—he had the stable broom, and he pushed the pan to Czar with it, and never even gave him a pat, or said a kind word to him. And it *did* seem so hard! So when he was gone I just went up and patted him as he was eating his great bones, and then I sat just inside his kennel and talked to him all the time, and made it sociable for him; and he brought me the biggest bone of all, and I pretended I liked it very much, and then I gave it him back and he lay down and ate it, and I stroked him and talked to him all the time. He *is* such an interesting dog to talk to when you know him. And after that I went every day, and—when I can—I give him his food, and we always have a great deal of conversation, and it isn't nearly so dull for him as it was at first. But I've never been able to go out with him, because coachman says I mustn't loose him. But we've always longed to take walks together, and if you say we may, it *will* be so nice.”

Colonel Rutland listened to all this with something of a shiver. He had not lived all this while without having known many instances of the wonderful under-

standing between children and animals, or of the forbearance shown often by the fiercest creatures to confiding little children; but, nevertheless, he could not picture the first approach of his small son to that great fierce dog in the midst of his bones without a tremor of thankful relief. Now it was abundantly evident that an excellent understanding existed between them, for Czar would come at the least sound of Squib's voice, and, when bidden to do so, would walk just behind him with docile submissiveness. The conquest made by the little boy, quite unconscious of conquest, was complete, and never had the Colonel felt so secure of training the dog and humanizing him as he did that day.

"If I let you take Czar out into the park every day for an hour, Squib," he said presently, "do you think you can teach him to be more gentle and obedient?"

"Oh, father, I think I can," answered the child with brightening eyes. "I'll explain everything to him so carefully—about being obedient and all that. I think he wants to be good—only he's got nobody to teach him and be good to him. But I should like to teach him. I'm sure he has a very good heart, and he understands what I say, I'm quite sure."

So the experiment was tried, and with signal success. The fierce dog became gradually tamed and dependable, and a fresh link was formed between Squib and his father.

Later on in the same year another incident occurred

which increased the Colonel's interest in "the odd one" of the family.

Like most country gentlemen of some leisure, Colonel Rutland was fond of hunting, although he could not give the time to it that some of his friends were able to do. Still, he had always one, and sometimes two hunters in his stable, and at this time, when Squib was just six years old, his favourite was a horse of the name of Charger, upon whom he had hunted three seasons in succession.

Charger had something of a history of his own with which Squib was not unconnected. Three years before, when the horse was five, and Squib three, the former had been brought up for Colonel Rutland's inspection, as the owner desired to sell him. He was then only just broken, for he had done no work as yet, the farmer who owned him having wished to let him run as long as possible, and then to sell him to some of the gentry as a hunter and weight-carrier. He was a very beautiful creature, with a grand shoulder and very strong hind-quarters, legs as sound and fine as the huntsman himself could wish to see, and a well-turned head and gentle eye. The Colonel and his wife and some of the children all assembled at the front-door to examine and look at the horse, who stood pawing the gravel, seeming as if he knew perfectly the commotion his beauty and strength were exciting. There were several guests in the house who knew something about horses, and a great

deal of conversation was going on after the animal had been walked, and trotted fast, his hoofs examined, and his eyes well peered into. He was growing rather restive now with all the waiting and testing, but was standing pretty quietly, held by the farmer, when suddenly little Squib, who was always very fond of animals, and seemed not to know the meaning of fear, ran forward from the group about his mother, and clasped his arms tightly round the hind leg of the young horse, laying his cheek against it with that caressing movement so common in little children.

A sudden hush fell upon the whole group—every man among them afraid to move or speak lest the horse should be frightened and kick out, as it seemed impossible that he should not do at that strange touch upon his leg. But the creature turned his head round, looked at the little, white clinging figure, and stood perfectly quiet under the unwonted caress. The next moment the Colonel had caught up his daring little son, and one of the gentlemen standing by said to the farmer with a short laugh,—

"I think you may take the horse round to the stables now; he has won himself a home here, or I am much mistaken."

So Charger stayed, and never a horse was better worth his money, as the Colonel often said. He was so gentle that Lady Mary herself sometimes rode to hounds upon him by her husband's side, and so strong and clever and enduring that the Colonel could have

sold him for almost any money in his own county if he had wished to part with him.

As for Squib, although he did not long remember the exploit of which he had been guilty that day, the story was often told in his hearing, and it seemed to make a bond between him and Charger which was closer than between him and any other horse, although the child was fond of them all. He was fonder of Charger than of his own little Shetland pony, although Shag was a great friend and favourite. But Charger was so sensible, so kind, so friendly, and so big ! There is always an attraction to a boy of native courage in the sensation of being mounted on a big horse. Often and often, when the great hunter was saddled and about to be brought round to the door, Squib would plead to be allowed to ride round upon him, and though on these occasions coachman himself would take the bridle and not permit any one else to superintend the child's feat, it was accomplished again and again without any danger ; for Squib had ridden his own pony bare-backed from the time he could get his small legs across the broad back, and was a veritable monkey for sticking on the back of anything with four legs.

But during this particular autumn, when Squib passed his sixth birthday, and Charger was "rising nine" as coachman called it, one of those sad mischances befell him which are unfortunately only too common with good hunters. He was carrying his

master in his own gallant fashion over some very slippery, sticky ground, when, in alighting after a fine leap, he came down upon a treacherous bit of ground where the foothold was very bad. With an effort which seemed to imply that he was thinking first of his rider's safety and second of his own, he avoided the fall which seemed for a moment inevitable, but he slipped badly and only recovered himself after a violent struggle. Colonel Rutland sprang safely to the ground and helped the gallant animal to get a better footing; but all this was not accomplished before Charger's shoulder was badly strained, and he had to be laid up in a loose box and carefully doctored for many months before any one could think of riding him again.

Squib was constant in his attentions to the disabled favourite all that time, and he and Charger and Czar spent many a happy morning in the paddock together, where Charger was turned out for an hour or two on warm days "to exercise hisself" as the groom called it. Squib also made great friends with the veterinary surgeon who attended Charger, and who would tell him stories of animals by the hour together; and it was from him that Squib first heard the bad news about the poor hunter.

"He won't never be good for hunting again, nor for that matter for riding either. That shoulder will always be weak. He might drop on it any time sudden like, and nobody cares to ride a horse like

that. The only thing now is to break him for harness if it can be done; but he's old to take to collar-work—more likely it'll just break his heart instead, poor fellow!"

The tears rose in Squib's eyes as he heard these words.

"They shan't break Charger's heart!" he cried indignantly. "I'm sure my father will never allow it."

"Well, sir, I hope not, for I don't think that horse'll ever break, for all he's so gentle and quiet. He's got a spirit of his own, he has; and when a creature has never had a collar over his head up to nine year old, why, they don't take kind to it, they don't!"

Soon it became known that poor Charger's hunting days were over, and it was quite a trouble to all the household to think that the master could never ride him safely again. Then came the question of breaking him for harness, but the few attempts that were made did not encourage the authorities to persevere.

"He throws hisself about so, sir," coachman would explain to Squib. "He's not used to it, and don't know what it means. He comes from a race of hunters, and don't have them family feelin's as some young hacks do, as takes the collar like mother's milk as you may say. He'll only wrench his shoulder again, and go lame all his life; and that would be a sad pity, seeing as how well he is now."

And then it was that a sudden inspiration seized upon Squib. He went straight from coachman's

presence to his father's study, and stood silently beside him as he wrote busily before his table. But when the Colonel presently looked up, as if to intimate that he was ready to hear what his small son had to say, Squib "went off" with unwonted vehemence.

"Father, you know about Charger. Coachman says he won't break, and Mr. Young said he would only break his heart. I don't want his heart to break. He's the nicest horse that ever lived, and I can't bear it. Father, didn't I hear you say that Shag was getting too old to do anything but mow the lawns, and that you must look out for a new pony for me by the time I was seven?"

"Yes, Squib, I think I did. Would you like a little Exmoor? They are very sure-footed and generally fast."

"I don't want an Exmoor, father. I don't want a pony at all. I want Charger instead."

"Charger!"

"Yes, father. Charger could carry me. Coachman says it's no more for him than a fly on his back. He'd be just as if he had nobody, and I've ridden him lots in the paddock. He likes it, and I like it; and he'd be nice, and safer for me than any pony, because he knows the country; you say so yourself, and he's so good, even mother wouldn't be frightened to let me go out on him. Father, I'm rising seven—that's what coachman calls it. I'm rising seven, and I never fall off anything. Let me have Charger

instead of a new pony. I shall like it so much better, and so will he!"

Something in the notion tickled Colonel Rutland's fancy, and a little conversation with coachman convinced him that there would be no risk of damage either to the child or to the horse in such an arrangement. The strong trustworthy hunter would carry the light weight of the small boy without the least fear of renewing the strain; and as Squib said, he had a remarkable knack of sticking on, whilst he had "hands as any horse would be proud to answer to," as the old coachman put it. And so his request was granted. The faithful old hunter was neither shot nor broken to uncongenial toil, but was gently and regularly exercised by the little fellow on the turf of the park, or permitted to trot steadily along the roads with his light burden, by the side of the Colonel on his own horse.

Squib was delighted, and his father amused, by the arrangement and the comments it provoked. The trusty horse justified all the confidence placed in him, and a stronger bond of friendship was thus established between the child and his four-footed friend, as well as between him and his rather stern and commanding father.

CHAPTER II.

GOING AWAY.

AND now, having introduced my little hero to you, I will lose no more time, but commence the story I have to tell of one particular year of his life.

Squib was by this time "rising nine," as he generally liked to call it. His next and ninth birthday would be in August, and this was May, and at Michaelmas he was to go to school, to his own mingled pride and regret. He enjoyed the thought of being a schoolboy, of gaining the independence and importance that always seemed to attach to his elder brothers from the fact that they only spent the holiday months at home, and were so much away at school; but he did not like to think of having to leave Czar and Charger and all his numerous and peculiar pets. He was not sure that any other person would understand how to manage them or to make them happy, and it weighed on him sometimes to think that they would miss him when he was gone. Still the thing would have to be done whether he liked it or not, and Squib was

resolving to take matters philosophically, and look at things on the bright side as far as possible.

A little excitement had lately come into his life from the advent of a new uncle from India, whom Squib did not remember ever to have seen before. Uncle Ronald was their father's youngest brother, and he had had a bad attack of jungle fever, and was to spend two years in Europe. He came straight to Rutland Chase, and Squib gave up much of his time to the entertainment of this new uncle, who spent a good part of every day in a long bamboo chair in the big hall, and seemed amused by the chatter of his small nephew. Squib felt it the more incumbent upon him to look after his uncle because his father was very busy, and his mother had been ailing all the spring-time, so that there was often nobody else to act as companion to this other invalid—who did not, however, seem to be suffering from anything worse than a little lassitude and languor. Still the doctor came regularly to see both him and Lady Mary Rutland, and one day as the little boy was perched up in the window seat of the big hall, getting up a lesson for Mademoiselle and keeping an eye upon Uncle Ronald at the same time, something very interesting happened.

It was a beautiful warm day early in May, and father had been driving mother out in the pony-carriage for the first time. As Squib was sitting there, the carriage returned, and when Colonel Rutland

led his wife into the house the pair seemed to be discussing something very earnestly together. Catching sight of his brother in his favourite chair, the Colonel exclaimed,—

“I say, Ronald, what do you think of a three months’ run to Switzerland. We’ve just met Dr. Dawes in the village, and he says that’s what both you and Mary want, to set you up again. I’ve not had a holiday myself since I don’t know when. I’m half-bitten by the notion, and Mary is quite on fire to be off!”

“Oh, Bruce ! I did not say that. I confess it has attractions for me ; but there is so much to think of. There are the children—”

“Oh, the children will be all right ! Mademoiselle will keep guard over the girls, and as for the twins, why, they are as safe with nurse as with us, and the boys are safe at school till the end of July, when we shall be back. There’s only Squib, who might get into mischief if left altogether to petticoat government, but I’ve half a mind to take the child with us. His observations of foreign life would amuse us, and can’t he speak German as well as French ? I’m sure that Swiss nursemaid of his taught him some barbarous patois of her own.”

“Ah yes—Lisa ; I’m afraid she did teach him some very outlandish German-Swiss patois, if he hasn’t forgotten it by this time. I wonder if he would like to go with us. I should enjoy having one child with

me, as you and Ronald are sure to go off mountaineering when he is stronger. Only it would be a great interruption to his lessons."

"Oh, bother the lessons!" cried Uncle Ronald. "Squib knows as much as he needs to make a good start at school—more than I did when I went, I know. He's a sharp little chap, and will soon pick up any lost time. Let's take him along by all means. I shall want an interpreter; I expect Asiatic languages are more in my line than European. Squib shall come as my interpreter. He speaks French first-rate, I know, and he'll do all the talking for me. Hallo! there he is! Come here, Squib, and tell us how you'd like to go to Switzerland."

Squib came forward with eyes shining with excitement. Ever since he could remember anything it had been his dream to go to Switzerland, and he could hardly believe his ears now that he heard the thing spoken of as an immediate prospect. Switzerland was as a dream to him—a dream of wonder and enchantment. From his earliest infancy he had heard entrancing stories of great, lonely snow-peaks, whispering pine woods, little chalets perched high up in green alps, brawling torrents, great, awful glaciers with dark mysterious crevasses, and spirits of the mountains who revealed themselves only to those upon whom the spell of the mountains had fallen. Crowds of images rose up in the child's mind as he slowly came forward, and the stress of his imagina-

tive flights was so great that it held him mute for a longer time than usual ; but when he did give expression to his opinion, it was with such enthusiasm and emphasis that his father and uncle both laughed aloud, and it became a settled thing from that time forward that Squib was to accompany the party to Switzerland, whenever the start should be made.

Squib, who was told that he might consider himself free of lessons from this very day until he went to school in September, closed the book he was still holding as though in a dream, and wandered out into the sunny garden with a heart swelling with wonder and delight.

Switzerland ! He was really going to Switzerland ! He should see with his own eyes the dazzling snow peaks, hear the roar of the avalanches breaking the eternal silence of those lonely valleys. He would see (as he thought at least) the chamois springing from peak to peak, and hear the jodling of the peasants as they took their cattle up into the green pastures. He would see it all—hear it all—all those things of which Lisa had told him, of which he had dreamed until he seemed to be able to see them at will when he shut his eyes. Perhaps he would even see Lisa again herself ; for had she not returned to Switzerland ? And Switzerland was such a little country on the map !

Lisa had been Squib's own peculiar attendant, and

he had given to her a very large slice of his childish affections. As has been said in the preceding chapter, Squib had had a little baby brother when he was not much more than a baby himself, and this little brother had been so ailing that nurse had had to give up almost all her time to him, and so Lisa—a young Swiss maid who was leaving a friend's nursery just at that juncture—was engaged to take entire charge of the elder little boy.

Having once come in that capacity, she stayed on for many years—until, in fact, Squib had no longer any need of a nurse; the delicate little brother who died, and the little twin sisters who were still in the nursery, had always occupied all nurse's attention, and Lisa had been retained year after year to attend to Master Squib, and to help with her needle in the care of the little girls' clothes. Lisa had loved Squib from the first with a singular devotion, which he repaid by a warm affection. He had learned to speak her curious patois as naturally as he had learned the English of his parents and sisters, and it seemed as if the power of using her native tongue again unsealed the silent Lisa's lips, for to Squib she would talk by the hour together of her country, her home, her people, and all the glories and the wonders of that land of mountains and wood and water whence she had come. She had much of the imaginative temperament which is so often found amongst a mountain race, and to her nursling she talked with

the utmost freedom and unreserve. Not only did she speak of the things she had heard and seen, but she also told him long stories of fairies and water-spirits, genii of the mountain, and the little brown men who dwelt in the caves and rocks, till the child's head was as full of enthusiasm as her own for her native land, as crowded with fanciful imaginings as if he had been a son of the soil himself.

Lisa had now been gone for nearly a year, and some of these imaginings had been growing a little faint and hazy; but they were all there, lying dormant, and ready to wake into active life on the smallest provocation, and as Squib wandered down the garden and into the yard, and found Czar all ready to share his ramble and his talk, he poured a whole volley of excited information into the dog's ears, lapsing almost unconsciously into Lisa's German patois as he did so, which, however, seemed to make no difference to Czar's power of comprehension.

The next days seemed to go by like magic. Squib found himself raised to a position of some importance in the nursery, on the strength of his approaching departure. The tailor from the next town called to measure him for two new suits of clothes; his sisters made much of him because they were so soon to lose him; and all the servants talked to him about his journey, and called him a lucky little boy to be taken.

It was rather hard to think of leaving Charger, who was such a very great friend and companion; but

coachman said that it would do Charger a "world of good" to get a run out for two months, now that he was growing elderly, and that pleased Squib a good deal, for he did not want his favourite to miss him too much.

"Maybe it'll be a good thing though, sir," said coachman, "since you are going to school by-and-by. It will break him in to having you gone for a spell, and he'll kind of know that you'll be coming back before so very long. I'll see he is well looked after, and he'll be in first-rate fettle for you by the time you get back."

The other trouble, about leaving Czar, was got over in a very unexpected and most satisfactory way; for Squib was told one day that Czar was to be taken with them to Switzerland.

"The master said so himself," the groom told Squib, when he came down to loose him for his morning's run. Czar was by this time a dog of mature years, and he had tamed down wonderfully. Indeed, he was often left loose during the day, and was allowed to lie on the terrace or patrol the gardens. But he lived in his house at night, and several of the men still stood in some awe of him; yet he was thoroughly under control now, and a very valuable watch-dog and guard. He was still devoted to Squib, and would obey him at a word or a look; but by this time he was attached to all the family; and whenever the master of the house was away, he slept

indoors at the foot of the great staircase ; and Lady Mary always said that she never felt nervous when she knew that Czar was on guard.

" You see, sir," the groom added in explanation, " them furrain parts is none too safe, what with all these bombs and one thing and another ; and the master says as he'll feel more happy like to have the dog with him. If so be as he were to go off hunting wolves or boars, or whatever they may have over yonder, or leastways climbing mountains, where her ladyship couldn't go, he'd like to leave the dog behind to look after the house ; and so it's all fixed now that Czar is to go."

This was great news for Squib, who quickly found his way indoors to make sure of it. Uncle Ronald was in the hall looking at his guns, and he gave Squib a friendly smile.

" Oh yes, that's all right enough," he answered in response to the eager inquiry. " You see we've heard of a chalet that will just suit your mother, right up in one of those *thals* as they call them, out of the way of regular tourists, where the air is almost enough to keep you going without the superfluities of meat and drink. It's furnished comfortably, too, which is a consideration ; and there's an old servant you once had who will come and act maid to your mother, and help her with the foreign ways of house-keeping—"

" What ! Lisa ?" asked Squib breathlessly.

"I think that was the name—anyway she was the girl who was your nurse so many years. She's going to come to be with you, and Mr. and Mrs. Lorimer are going to come out with us and share the chalet. You know who the Lorimers are, I suppose?"

"Yes—they come every year to stay here. They are very nice. Mrs. Lorimer is mother's very great friend, I think. We all like her very much."

"That's all right. I've heard as much myself. Well, Mr. Lorimer is a great Alpine Club man, and no end of a mountaineer, and knows all the passes and the peaks and the guides, and the ways of things; and we shall go off from time to time with him and do some climbing, and then your mother and Mrs. Lorimer will be left at the chalet with you for their protector, and we thought that a dog like Czar would be a good addition to the party; so it's settled that he's to go. That's just about how it is, you see."

"I see," answered Squib, looking very thoughtful and contemplative, and after a long pause he asked tentatively, "I suppose we couldn't take Charger with us too?"

"I'm afraid not, old chap. Charger would be rather a large order; and I don't think we'd get him up to the chalet without a steam crane or some trifles of that sort. Swiss Alps aren't just cut out for English horses. I'm afraid Charger must stay at home."

However, to have Czar was much, and Squib was very well content. Czar, he had felt sure, would miss him more than Charger, for he was more with him; and Charger had friends amongst all the stable hands, whilst Czar was regarded with more fear than love in many quarters. It also pleased Squib greatly to be told that on the journey Czar was to be his special care. The party would travel leisurely and easily on account of Lady Mary, and there would be a good many stoppages at various places before they reached their destination. As they would have a carriage to themselves almost invariably, it was probable the dog would be able to share it with them; but at the stations and all such places Squib was instructed to look after the creature, and have him upon his mind, as there would be other things for the gentlemen of the party to think of. Squib felt a great pride and satisfaction in this charge, and confided all the arrangements to Czar, who heard them with great gravity.

Time flew by so quickly that Squib was almost surprised to awake one morning and find that it was really the day of departure. The start was to be made in the morning. They were to go to London first, and lunch there, and then take the train to Folkestone, where they would sleep and be ready for the boat the next day.

Squib had never been to London even, and his sisters, who had once spent a week there, thought

it a pity he would not be able to see the Zoological Gardens, and the Tower, and Madame Tussaud's. But Squib had no room for regret on this score, he was in such a fever to see Switzerland and Lisa again, and the mountains and glaciers and all the wonders of his dreams. He felt very grand, dressed in his new travelling suit of tan-coloured homespun —jacket, knickerbockers, cap, and waistcoat all to match—and strong new stockings of the same shade, with new boots strong enough for mountain scrambling. His sisters had joined together in the purchase of a whistle on a chain, which they thought would be very useful for calling Czar, if he should wander away in a new place; and Squib wore it for the first time this morning, and felt wonderfully grown up in doing so, for the steel chain looked like a watch chain, and he almost felt as if he were wearing a watch all the time.

The good-byes were rather hard to make, for the little girls all cried, and Squib's own eyes got very moist, and there was a great lump in his throat which half-choked him, whilst everything looked misty and blurred as he went about from one to another, promising to bring all sorts of treasures back with him, and leaving last messages with almost everybody. It made it all the harder because mother was almost crying too as she kissed her little daughters, and left all sorts of last charges with kind Mademoiselle; but Uncle Ronald went about laughing and

making jokes, telling his little nieces that they ought to be sent off to India for an indefinite number of years to know what saying good-bye was like; and as for getting up the waterworks because mother was going for a few weeks to Switzerland, why, they were just little geese—he couldn't call them any better name than that!

Uncle Ronald always made people laugh, and so the good-byes were got over at last between smiles and tears, and then the party found themselves skimming along the road to the station, with Czar running silently along behind, more excited than usual, because he knew quite well that something unwonted was afoot, although perhaps he had not realized quite as clearly as Squib believed that he was on his way to Switzerland.

Squib's first sight of the sea was at Folkestone, and very wonderful he thought it. There was just enough breeze blowing to make the waves turn over in great green breakers, and come crashing down on the shingle with that strange sound which is like nothing else in the world. Colonel Rutland indulged his little son with a ramble along the beach after tea, and Squib enjoyed it greatly, especially sending Czar into the water after his father's stick, and his indignant barking at the crested wave, which would not stop for all his barking, nor give back for a second when he flew savagely at it. Other people besides Squib were entertained by the conduct of

the great handsome dog, and Squib was very well satisfied with his first day's travel.

But the next one was far more exciting.

They were actually to cross the water in the steam-boat which was lying moored alongside the great stone pier. Uncle Ronald took Squib down to look at it some short time before they were allowed on board, and Squib thought it a very wonderful vessel indeed, although Uncle Ronald laughed and called it a "poor little tub," which seemed a very disrespectful way of speaking about it, Squib thought.

When he was once safely on board, he made friends with the sailors, and asked them a number of questions, and then went and looked down at the great throbbing engines, and talked to a smutty man who seemed to know a great deal about them, and who explained a great deal to him very good-naturedly—only, unfortunately, Squib did not understand much better at the end than he had done at the beginning. However, the man admired Czar very much, and said it wasn't often they saw such a fine dog as that in foreign parts, he was sure ; and that pleased Squib very much. So he told his new friends all about his home and his sisters and Charger, and how he was going to Switzerland for two months to take care of his mother when his father went up mountains ; and altogether the time passed so quickly and pleasantly that he was quite surprised when the train came puffing up, and every-

body got busy, and he was taken away by his uncle to watch the new people coming on board.

Mr. and Mrs. Lorimer were amongst these, and Squib soon picked them out. He did not, however, quit his post of vantage till he had seen all the luggage swung on board by the great crane, which he thought very interesting; and then he went to the very back of the boat where he had seen a nice coil of rope lying, and scrambling up on this he found that he was able to make a fine perch for himself, where he could see the water and have a fine view of the boat, and watch the shore as it seemed to slip away astern.

There was rather a stiff breeze blowing when they got into mid-channel, and the vessel rocked and rolled as the big green waves lifted her up and let her down. Squib thought it better than any rocking-chair or rocking-horse he had ever been on, but he noticed that some of the people began to look very queer. A sort of green hue overspread their faces, and then they generally retired from the scene, and he wondered where they all went. Poor Czar, too, grew rather restless and unhappy, and got up from beside Squib, and took a turn or two and then came and lay down again, and looked up pitifully at his little master, as if asking for sympathy. He did not seem able to get comfortable, and Squib wondered what was the matter.

“ Oh, Lor’ bless you, little master, he’s only a bit sea-

sick, just the same as Christian folks!" said the kindly sailor whose acquaintance Squib had made previously, and who chanced to pass along at that time. "Like enough he'll just be a bit sick, like the other folks, and then be right again. It's a queer thing when you come to think of it, sea-sickness. But Lor' bless you, nine-tenths of the folks as comes aboard in bad weather can't stand up against it. You don't seem no worse yourself though, little master."

"Oh no; I like it. I didn't know what made them all look so queer. I heard mother saying she was afraid it would be rough crossing, and that she would be ill. I hope she isn't."

Poor Czar, however, did not escape, and was very unhappy for a time, and then quite ill; but the passage was quickly made, and once on firm ground again he thought no more of his troubles.

It amused Squib very much suddenly to hear everybody talking French, and to see the men in their blue blouses, and the fisherwomen in their white caps.

"I wish they wore pretty things like that in England," he thought as he looked curiously about him, "and what a noise they do make; and how they jabber, and laugh, and move their hands about —just like Mademoiselle when she wants to make us understand. Oh, Uncle Ronald, are we going off already? It is such fun watching the people! I think France is a very pretty, funny country. Are

we going to the Douane now? Mademoiselle told me all about that. And shall I have to ‘declare’ Czar? Is he contraband?”

“I don’t think so, but you can ask if you like,” answered Uncle Ronald, laughing. “Come along this way if you want to see the business. Your father is going to the train with the ladies, and Mr. Lorimer will see to the luggage.”

“I should like to go too,” said Squib, keenly interested in the proceedings; and accordingly his uncle led him into a great bare room where luggage was being brought in on the shoulders of blue-bloused men, and where officials were gravely asking questions over the counter on which it was placed, and marking off with white chalk the piles of luggage passed. Squib was greatly amused, especially when one man was detected smuggling tobacco under a lot of books. They could not stay to the end of the altercation, but the gestures of the French official amused the child exceedingly, as well as the laborious efforts of the Englishman to follow, and hold his own in conversation.

Then there was a rush for the train, a confabulation with the authorities about Czar, who was finally permitted to go in the carriage with the party, Uncle Ronald feeling sure that the balance in his favour was turned by Squib’s pretty childish pleading in French, and his confidence that everybody must see the many perfections of his four-footed friend.

Perhaps the guard did not particularly desire the companionship of the great hound ; perhaps Colonel Rutland's air of *milord Anglais* had due effect. Anyway, Czar travelled peacefully to Paris with his owners, and was accorded a like privilege almost the whole way through.

Paris was very gay as the travellers drove through the streets to the hotel in the Rue Rivoli, where Colonel Rutland always stayed. Lady Mary was by this time very tired, and went at once to her room ; but Squib was immensely excited by everything, and very anxious to see at least one or two of those sights of Paris over the description of which Mademoiselle had so often grown excited ; so Uncle Ronald good-naturedly volunteered to pilot him, provided he would do the talking, to which Squib readily agreed.

First they had some lunch in the Champs Elysées under the trees, which seemed to Squib such a superior arrangement, that he wondered why people ever went indoors to eat. Then they visited the Louvre and spent an hour there, after which a fiacre was chartered to take them to Notre Dame and one or two other places of interest, which Squib felt much elevated by having seen. But the real excitement of the day was when, in returning, Uncle Ronald took him into a shop such as only Paris seems able to produce, and after a great deal of laughing and chaffering with a bright-faced French

saleswoman, who was equally amused at Uncle Ronald's bad and Squib's good French, a small silver hunting-watch was purchased, together with a silver chain, and presented to the astonished Squib by his young uncle.

"Something to remember your first visit to Paris by, old chap," he said, as he led him back to the hotel, "and to tell you the time when you get out amongst the mountains, and have nobody to remind you of it, and no big gong carrying a mile to ring you in."

As for Squib, he hardly knew what to make of his good fortune, and his thanks were so long in coming that it seemed as if Uncle Ronald would have to go without them altogether; but, when they did come, it was with a "chiff and a rush," as he described it afterwards, which was in itself enough to justify the sobriquet by which his small nephew went. Early upon the following morning, the party started for their long journey across France to Switzerland.

CHAPTER III.

THE CHALET IN THE HILLS.

"I DON'T call France pretty at all, though Mademoiselle does call it 'La belle France,'" said Squib from his station at the carriage window, after some hours of silent study. "It's all flat like a map, and the trees look as if somebody had gone round with an axe and taken all their heads off when they were little, and the rivers look like canals. I like the people and the animals. It's nice of the cows to help in the fields and to draw the wagons; and the dogs help too, which is very kind of them; and I like the funny clothes the people wear. I should like a blue blouse myself, when I get to Switzerland. But I don't call it pretty at all; not even the vineyards—and I always thought vineyards would be lovely. England is much prettier—but there's something funny and queer about France, and that makes it interesting. I like the way they build their châteaux—with such queer little pepper-box towers, and such a lot of red roof. I should like to live in one of those little turrets myself, and have a lot of animals

there to keep me company. But I don't think there's so very much in France that's amusing."

Squib was keenly interested in all he saw, but his longing all the while was for Switzerland, and the chalet in the hills of which he had heard so much, and Lisa, who was to be waiting for them there, with her stories of mountain-spirits and the water-fairies. He was almost sorry when he found that a few days were to be spent at Interlaken before they reached their final destination; yet as soon as they crossed the frontier the sense of interest and delight awoke within him, and he had no time for regrets or useless longings.

Even the railway travelling was more amusing now —the little queer carriages with a passage all down them, the blowing of horns when each station was reached or left behind, the costumes of the peasants as the travellers got more and more into the heart of the country, and the increasing beauty and wildness of the views from the carriage window.

It was dark when they reached Interlaken, and Squib had been for some time asleep, leaning against his father's shoulder. He did not remember much about the arrival that night, nor how he got into that funny little narrow wooden bed, with its big square pillows and little white eider-down quilt. But after sleeping the sound, dreamless sleep of childhood for a number of hours, Squib suddenly woke up very wide to find the room bright with sunshine, and to

realize, after a few moments of utter perplexity, that he was really in Switzerland at last. With a great throb of sudden excitement he got quickly out of bed and pattered across the cold polished floor to the window. A white curtain was drawn across it, but in a moment Squib had pulled this aside, and then he gave one great gasp and stood perfectly still—a little white figure, with a tumbled head of yellow-brown curls, and a pair of big grey eyes fixed immovably upon something outside that window, as though they would never be detached from the sight.

And what was it that Squib saw? A great white dazzling peak rising up in stately grandeur against the glorious blue of the summer sky. The sunlight bathed it in golden light. In that wonderful brilliant clearness of early morning, space seemed annihilated, and the grand snow-peak seemed to Squib to be strangely near—keeping silent watch and ward over the valley below and all the inhabitants of it. It was flanked and supported, as it were, by a whole range of rocky, snow-crowned mountains, yet seemed to stand alone, lifting its majestic head into the very heavens. Squib stood and gazed with wonder, awe, and rapture, until the scene was graven into his memory for ever. What Lisa had said about the spell of the snow-mountains was all true. He had begun already to feel it himself. He stood before the window lost to all sense of his surroundings, hearing none of the sounds about him, knowing

nothing of where he was—eyes and heart and soul alike gone out to that lonely queen of the mountains, standing out in dazzling radiance against the brilliance of the morning sky. How long he thus stood he never knew, and he was only brought back to the things of the present by the sound of a laughing voice behind him.

“ Hallo, old chap!—lost in the clouds already? Has the Jungfrau bewitched you altogether? Or are you ready for anything so sublunary as breakfast?”

Squib turned round with a jump to find that Uncle Ronald had come in from his room next door, and to feel that his own cheeks were wet, just as if he had been crying, and he was quite positive he had not even been thinking of anything so silly!

“ Come, hurry up, youngster! You are late already; and we mean to go off to Grindelwald after breakfast, so you must look sharp! Yes, she’s a grand lady is the Jungfrau—she gets at all of our hearts in a fashion; but hurry up now and come down to the breakfast-room. Mountain air gives one a fine appetite, as you’ll find out before long.”

Squib woke out of his dream only to find himself in a country of enchantment. He hurried through his toilet, and descended to find his party (with the exception of his mother, who was keeping to her room to recover from the fatigues of the journey) seated at one end of a very long table, of which they

were the only occupants, and was soon seated beside them discussing omelette and cutlet with fried potato chips, queer curly rolls, and golden honey, with all the zest of a growing boy and of a mountain traveller. Meantime he gleaned from the talk of his companions that they were about to drive into the heart of some of those mysterious regions of which he had hitherto dreamed, without daring to hope to see them. The glacier at Grindelwald, the wonderful fall of the Staubbach, the Wengern Alp, Lauterbrunnen and Mürren ! He heard the names in a vague and dream-like fashion, but hardly knew what was settled, and did not trouble to ask. What did it matter where they went in such a region of wonders ? Wherever they went, that great towering peak must be near at hand, and if he had that to look at he felt he need ask no more.

Three or four wonderful days were passed by Squib in this fairy region. Each day the same carriage came to the door, with the same two strong, small, but willing and active little horses. He was set on the box beside the broad-faced driver, with whom he soon established terms of mutual intimacy, and after a little while he found himself able to exchange ideas with him with perfect freedom. He talked very much the same odd guttural language that Lisa had spoken when she was excited and in earnest, and in a very short time all Squib's old fluency came back to him. He was interpreter to the whole party, and

not a little proud of his position in that respect; but what he enjoyed even more was getting Johann to tell him all about the mountains, the people who lived amongst them, what they did in the long, dark winter months, when the snow came down and shut them in week after week and month after month; how the men in summer went out as guides and porters, and took travellers across the passes and up the great white peaks; and how the women stayed at home and tilled the land, and made provision against the winter season, driving their flocks of goats out into the green hills, and making quantities of cheese, some to sell and some to lay by to be consumed when the dark, cold season set in.

Johann had once been a guide himself, till a slight accident had hindered him from any more mountain-eering, and had obliged him to take to the less exciting life of a driver during the busy summer season. But Squib learned, to his deep excitement and delight, that his new friend had twice made the ascent of the Jungfrau, and he made him give him every detail of the climb, and listened with breathless interest to the story each time it was related.

Another friend Squib made at this time was an old man who stood at a certain place in the roadway, where was a wonderful echo, and blew an immense long horn whenever visitors passed, so that they could hear the echoes reverberating and resounding backwards and forwards amongst the hills, till it

seemed as if there were hundreds of voices all answering each other in weird cries. Squib could have listened to these echoes for ever, and also to the stories the old man had to tell about the caves in the hills, and the wonders of torrent and valley. He twice spent an hour with him whilst others of the party were resting or sketching, and having won the old man's confidence, both by his talk and by the gift of sundry coins, he was allowed to blow the great horn himself once or twice, a thing which filled him with delight, although he did not find himself very successful in bringing out the deeper and more powerful notes as the old man was able to do.

Of his wonder and awe at the sight of the great glacier and its blue caves, or of those feelings which the sight of the dazzling snow-peaks awoke within him, Squib never tried to speak. Those about him were not even sure whether any very deep impression was made by them; but his observations on the manners and customs of the country would come out at intervals with a sudden rush, as when sitting at dinner on the eve of their departure for the chalet, he suddenly broke out,—

“I shall be sorry to go away for some things,”—this in answer to a question from his mother—“though I want to get to the chalet very much. But everything here is very funny and very interesting. I shall be sorry not to have Johann and the

horses any more. Will everything be as funny up there as it is here?"

"How is it all funny?" asked Uncle Roland.

"Oh, every way, you know. But I was thinking of the horses just then. I like the horses here, but I think it's very confusing for them to have to go the wrong side of the road always. I can't think how they remember so well. I think perhaps it's because they grow their manes the wrong side too—to help them to remember. Most of them have their manes on the wrong side. I asked Johann about it, but he didn't seem to understand that it was wrong. I'm glad we didn't bring Charger; he wouldn't have liked it at all. But the horses here don't mind it. I think they are very good-tempered. They have such kind faces, and they like to be talked to. They don't wear blinkers, hardly ever, except in the carriages. I think that's rather nice for them. They can see the country as they go along. I wonder if they like seeing the snow-mountains very much! I think it's nice that they can look about them the same as we do."

But after all, the pleasure and excitement of getting to their mountain home was greater than anything else. It took the best part of a day to reach it, because, although the distance was not very great, there was no direct road, and they had to take a circuitous route, which Squib found very delightful, though some of the party wished it had been a little less tedious.

First, there was a long carriage drive with Johann, behind a great coach-like conveyance and four horses, through winding, ascending roads, with the usual accompaniments of men with great horns, children selling flowers, women at work by the wayside at their lacemaking, and all the sights and sounds of busy little village communities making the most of their short season of heat and brightness.

Later on there was a short journey in one of those strange *funiculaire* railways, which were such a source of interest and curiosity to Squib. The little trains seemed to him to crawl about the mountains like gigantic serpents, moving silently upwards or downwards, quite independent of the level which had been indispensable to the railway travelling with which he had been previously acquainted. And the sensation of mounting up and up in one of these silent, mysterious little vehicles kept him spellbound with wonder and admiration. Uncle Ronald had explained to him many times already the principle upon which they were worked, but nothing seemed to him to lessen the sense of mystery and unreality that attached to this mode of progression, as he felt himself lifted higher and higher into those regions and altitudes which fascinated him so strangely.

When they left the train they found themselves in a region unlike any that Squib had seen before. They were all amongst pine woods and those green alps which lie beneath the sterner altitudes of the

snow ranges, and are full of flowers and sunshine, and the bleat of goats, and the soft sound of wood and water. There was no regular road here to the chalet, but only a mule path. Some mules were waiting in readiness for the party, but only the ladies cared to ride. The baggage was cleverly packed and strapped on the rest of the docile animals, and the march began through these silent stretches of pine wood, and across bright sloping meadows gemmed with flowers, now dipping downwards to cross a plank-bridge through which the shining water could be seen foaming beneath, now rising by many a zigzag upwards and onwards towards the sloping shoulder of the hillside—onward, ever onward, each turn in the path revealing new beauties, till at last the lad who was leading the way rounded a corner in a woodland path, turned back with a broad smile to Squib, who had kept near to him all the while, the faithful Czar always at his heels, and pointing a little downwards and along the hillside, he said,—

“There !”

Squib reached his side with a bound and looked. They were just clear of the wood now, and were able to see plainly before them. They had crossed the ridge of the hills they had been steadily mounting ever since they left the rail, and now were able to look down into the valley on the other side.

What a valley it was ! The sides were clothed

with little woods, some of fir trees, some of young forest trees, clad now in the tender tints of early summer; at the bottom ran a leaping torrent of foaming water, spanned by many a little frail plank-bridge giving access to the green slopes opposite. And these green slopes were dotted with those little low chalets which are used for the shelter of the flocks in bad weather, and for the temporary abode of those who tend them there during the brief summer of the mountains. Above these again lay grim stretches of rock, seamed with dark fissures, and above that again the whiteness of the everlasting snow, as the chain of dazzling peaks lifted itself against the dark blue of the sky.

Squib gazed and gazed with a sense of tremulous wonder and delight. It seemed to him as if this quiet valley were the realization of all his ideals ever since he had begun to think about his sojourn in Switzerland. Wood and water, meadows bright with flowers, green alps and snow mountains beyond! What could the child of man desire more? In one place he could even see the green, mysterious depths of a glacier, and as he stood watching and listening spellbound, the silence was broken by the rumbling sound of the fall of an avalanche! Truly there was nothing left for him to wish for!

But the lad was hardly content with this long silence, and touched the arm of the little boy.

“There!” he said in his rude patois; “there is the

place—look! That is the house where the gracious lords and ladies are going."

Squib started into keen interest now. He had realized from the first moment that this valley was the right one, but he had not had time to think of the chalet itself in his joy at the surroundings.

"Where?" he asked eagerly.

The lad pointed again, and Squib then saw about a mile farther on, and standing upon a little eminence of its own, with a belt of whispering pines behind it, a chalet such as a wealthy man may build for himself as a summer residence amongst the mountains, with the wide-peaked roof, great overhanging eaves, light wooden exterior staircase, and all those accessories in the way of balconies and so forth which tend to make residence in such houses so delightful during the brief but hot summer season of mountain regions.

With a cry of delight and rapture, Squib sprang forward. He had walked far already, but was not in the least tired. He saw before him the home of his dreams, where Lisa was awaiting him, and without thinking of pausing for the rest of the party to come up, he rushed helter-skelter along the narrow mule path, with Czar tearing along beside him, bounding on ahead in his excitement (caught from the child), and then rushing back to see that all was well, and giving vent to a series of deep bays that awoke the echoes in the silent valley.

That sound was heard by a pair of listening ears

within the walls of the chalet. As Squib ran breathlessly onwards, he was aware that something human in a fluttering dress, and with something white about the head, was coming rapidly out towards him. In a few minutes, with a rapturous cry, the warm-hearted little fellow had flung himself into the outstretched arms of his ex-nurse.

“Lisa! Lisa! Lisa!”

“Liebchen! mein Liebchen!”

As for Czar, he was as excited as anybody, and he remembered Lisa as well as his little master. His great black muzzle was thrust between the pair, and faithful Lisa, with a sound between laughing and weeping, threw her arms about the great dog’s neck and kissed him between the eyes.

“Kaiser—the good Kaiser!” she cried. “And he knew poor Lisa too. Oh, the good dog—the grand Kaiser!”

Lisa always called him Kaiser. Squib had forgotten that till now, and the familiar sound of it made him laugh with pleasure.

“Oh, Lisa, it is so nice to see you again! I have been looking forward to it all the time. Now take me in and show me the house. I don’t think the others will be here just yet; the mules come so slowly up the zigzags. Czar and I just came up straight with the boy, I was in such a hurry to get here. I shall have time to see everything before the rest come.”

Lisa led the way back, holding Squib's hand fast in hers, and hardly taking her eyes from his face the whole time. As for Squib, he was perfectly happy having his old nurse back again, answering her questions about home, asking her innumerable questions himself about this valley, and all the wonders and delights he knew it contained.

The chalet itself was soon seen over. After the large house at home, and the big hotels he had been in since, it seemed to the child quite a little place, fascinating and attractive in its very smallness and queer bareness, but soon seen and disposed of. The rooms were all spotlessly clean, and the polished floors shone like mirrors. The balconies to the rooms were the chief attraction to Squib; and he was greatly charmed at finding that not only had his own little room one of these, but also that it was provided with a tiny external staircase, by which he could get in and out at will. He saw by Lisa's face that she knew she had prepared a pleasant surprise for him in this, and his bright smile and hug of acknowledgment were ample reward.

But it was the outer world that really fascinated Squib. The chalet was very nice as the necessary home during his stay amongst the mountains, but it was the mountains themselves that were everything to the imaginative little boy—the mountains and the brawling torrents, and the whispering woods and the flowers. He had seen gentians by the hundred as he

ascended by the mule path, and already he was planning how he should make collections of all the Alpine flowers, pressing some in a book he had brought for the purpose, and taking roots of others home to try to make a bit of Alpine garden in his own special border. Squib was a born collector and naturalist, as well as a dreamer of dreams, and had collections innumerable at home. Lisa had always been his faithful ally in days of old, keeping his rubbish carefully so that the head-nurse might not order wholesale destruction, and she took as keen an interest in the collections as Squib did himself. He knew that she would help him now, and he soon saw that she knew where every flower of the hills was to be found.

Squib was positively radiant with happiness by the time the rest of the party arrived, and was everybody's assistant and messenger as the task of unpacking and settling down was commenced.

There were other servants in the house, but only Lisa knew anything of English, and Squib's fluency in the odd vernacular of the district was very useful. He had made firm friends with everybody on the place before the first evening had passed, and when they sat down at last to the nondescript travellers' meal that was like dinner and tea rolled into one, Colonel Rutland looked across at his wife, who, tired, but smiling, was seated at the head of the table and doing the honours of the simple repast, and said,—

“I think I did well to bring Squib along with us.”

"He is very useful, a capital little interpreter," answered Lady Mary with a smile. "I was horrified once at the frightful jargon Lisa was teaching the child to talk, and almost sent her away for it, fearing that it would be the ruin both of his English and of his German, but it has come in wonderfully useful now. They do not understand my German half so well as his patois. And Lisa's English has got very rusty."

It was very exhilarating to Squib to feel himself of use, and there was nothing which he more desired than to win the approval of his beautiful mother. Lady Mary was not one of those mothers who are always caressing and fondling their children, and yet they loved her with an almost adoring love, and desired her approval above everything in the world. As she bent a soft, smiling glance on Squib when she spoke, he felt his heart give a great bound, and slipping round the table till he reached her side, he put his small hand gently upon hers.

"I shall have to take care of you when father and Uncle Ronald go to climb the mountains with Mr. Lorimer, shan't I, mother? You see I *can* take care of you now, don't you? I can be useful, and there will always be Czar to keep away anybody who would frighten you. But I don't think there will be anybody to do that in our valley. I think the mountains keep watch over it, as Lisa says, and keep the evil spirits out!"

The mother, who understood the child's mind best,

smiled and kissed him as she dismissed him to bed, for the time was getting on now, and the long daylight failing. The gentlemen laughed and teased him a little about his "queer fancies" but Squib did not think them queer at all, he was so sure that there was something personal and protective about those white watchers opposite; and when he knelt to say his prayers that night, he knelt where he had them full in view all the time.

"They have been there always," he said to himself, with a sensation akin to awe, "just as they are now, with nothing between them and God. I think He must have made them so grand and white and beautiful because He liked to look at them, and if He likes to look down at them, why, it must make them good!"

There was something very grand and wonderful in the way those white peaks stood out against the darkening sky in that clear transparent air. A short time ago they had been dyed a wonderful rose pink, as they caught the reflected glory of the setting sun; now they were rather grey than red, with a look of almost awful aloofness and grandeur as they stood up in their spotless whiteness and purity.

And then as the child watched this change with a strange sense of fascination, the great round moon rose slowly above the ridge, and at once new beauty and grandeur were thrown over the whole world. Great towering shadows seemed to be cast athwart

the valley, and then the snow-slopes began to glimmer and shine with a new and almost unearthly radiance. Squib held his breath as he watched the moon rise over the snow-covered ridge, and the transformation of those rugged peaks and fissures into a new world of ebony and silver.

How long he would have watched it, forgetting all besides, may well be questioned, but he was quickly disturbed by an anxious voice,—

“ *Liebchen! — Liebchen!* — what art thou doing? Thou wilt catch thy death of cold up here in the nipping mountain air!”

And Squib was quickly caught up in a pair of strong arms and hustled with ignominious rapidity into the queer little bed which seemed a necessary part of Swiss life.

But he was altogether too happy to be seriously ruffled by any such summary proceeding; and all he did by way of retaliation was to keep fast hold of Lisa’s hand and refuse to let her go till she had talked him to sleep with the most entrancing of her stories of the mountains.



"Squib listened with a strange sense of fascination."

CHAPTER IV.

THE LITTLE GOAT-HERD.

SURELY never had boy been so happy before as was little Squib in his mountain home !

He had perfect liberty to rove where he would, so long as he went nowhere that Czar could not follow him. This stipulation, as Colonel Rutland observed, would keep him from any precipitous ascents or descents, and restrict his wanderings to safe paths ; and the fidelity and sagacity of the dog were quite to be trusted should the child lose his way. Czar would be certain to bring him safe home again ; but, indeed, there was not much fear that Squib would lose his way. He had a decided "bump of locality," as Uncle Ronald called it, and the green valley with its many attractions was a safe place for the boy to wander in.

For the first fortnight of his residence at the chalet, Squib had no disposition to stray very far away. There were so many attractions close at hand that it was needless to go far afield for his pleasures. Why, just by climbing up through the meadows and wood behind the house you could find more flowers

than could be properly pressed and arranged in many days—gentians, small and large, the delicate little soldanella with its cyclamen leaf, the tiny and exquisite pinguicula with its fairy-like white bloom, and the yellow anemones which made quite a carpet in one little glade, hemmed in between the spurs of a dim fir wood. Then down by the bed of the little brawling torrent, which was always racing and tumbling down the hillside to join the wider river below, grew in obscure and shady corners the golden auriculas with their graceful bells and silvery leaves. As to the lower-lying meadows, they were glorious with their wealth of many-hued flowers, the blue salvia, purple crane's-bill, yellow clover, the wild salsafy with its golden bloom, that Squib believed to be a rudbeckia until somebody told him to the contrary, and warned him against including it in his collection, as it was a tiresome thing to have in the garden, and grew rampant and masterful beyond bearing. The delicate Alpine roses, too, with their white and yellow clusters of blossom, were a perfect delight to the little botanist, and he hardly knew where to begin or where to stop in digging up roots to be kept in his garden behind the chalet, ready for final transportation to England.

His mother took great interest in his flowers and plants, and Mrs. Lorimer knew the names of almost all the Alpine plants, and whereabout they grew, whilst Lisa was able to give him practical help in

digging and delving, and told him all sorts of stories about the different properties of the herbs he sometimes brought home, and how they could be distilled into Enzian-schnapps as she called it, though what sort of stuff that might be Squib could never make out.

And then there were all Lisa's stories to be listened to again, with even a greater sense of fascination here amongst the mountains themselves than in the nursery at home. Why, the little men of the mountains—the Bergmännlein, as Lisa called them—might have their caves in the sides of any of these hills; and it always seemed as if everybody who once strayed in there came out a hundred years older at the end of what had seemed to him a very short time. Squib sometimes wondered with awe if he would ever find his way accidentally into one of these caves one day, and come back to find the chalet in ruins, the saplings grown to monster forest trees, and the glacier rolled farther down into the valley; for Lisa declared that it was always moving on—on—on—although Squib found it hard to believe.

Talking of the glacier always made Lisa speak of the Seligen Fräulein as she called them—the ice-maidens, who loved to woo to sleep the unwary travellers who trusted to their soft guiding voices, and let themselves be lured from the path and down—down—down into some cold dim crevasse or grotto whence no return could be made. Squib listened

with a strange sense of fascination as Lisa told him of these snow-white maidens with shining eyes, and hair like powdered crystal, and how they sang to sleep the victims they had lured to destruction, and how that sleep lasted for years and years, and how the sleeper was found at last, still smiling in his dreams, when, after many generations had passed away, the ice-maidens would yield up their prey at a certain icy portal where the river came rushing and sweeping out of a great green ice grotto, in which the Seligen Fräulein were said to hold high revel.

"And do they wake when they come out?" asked Squib with breathless eagerness, but Lisa shook her head.

"Na! na!—they never woke again. Nobody ever woke who had felt the kisses of the ice-maidens. They were jealous—they would not have their captives leave them for others. Na! na! It was an ill thing to get with the Bergmännlein or the Seligen Fräulein. The little Herr must beware of all such things."

How much Squib believed of all these mountain legends, and how much Lisa herself believed, it would be hard to say; but the fascination of the subject was the same, even though there might be a lingering doubt in the mind both of listener and teller. The sense of something weird and unseen, uncomprehended in these lonely mountain heights, grew upon the child rather than diminished as he came to dwell

among them. The legends which had grown up in the mouths of the peasants were but the expression of those feelings which life in such lonely heights cannot but suggest—the sense of mystery and unreality, the consciousness of great overwhelming forces at work, the existence of a spiritual and eternal world just beyond the ken of human knowledge and experience.

Often the talk between the pair would drift from the fanciful superstitions of an imaginative peasantry to the region of the world of spirits dimly indicated in Holy Scripture, and Squib would bring out his little Bible and search there for such passages as seemed to give glimpses into the unseen, and strive to translate them into the language so much more familiar to Lisa. The book of the Revelation was now studied by him with an interest it had never held for him before—though like most children he had often read the mystic words with a strange sense of fascination; but now, as he watched from some lonely knoll or rocky height the gorgeous pageantry of the clouds, or the reflections they cast upon the everlasting snows, he would almost think that he saw the heavens opened and the armies of heaven riding forth on white horses, conquering and to conquer. Or amid the wonderful lights of sunrise or sunset, when the mountains glowed and burned with lambent fire, and the sky was almost too dazzling for the eye to rest upon, he would fancy that, far, far away in its

golden depths, he could see the great white gates of pearl, or even the shining city coming down out of heaven, like a bride prepared for the marriage.

But of these things he seldom spoke—perhaps because he had hardly words in which to express them ; and besides it was not often that he found time for such solitary musings ; for the days were very full of occupation, and Squib might have been “made of gutta-percha,” as Uncle Ronald declared he was, for his readiness to go everywhere and see everything.

So what with his own private botanizing excursions, and the walks he took with father and uncle, the days seemed to race by almost faster than he could count ; and it was only when the three gentlemen had departed for a mountaineering expedition that was likely to last for some weeks, that Squib felt himself at leisure to go further afield and explore the more distant parts of his valley.

He had expected to be his mother’s companion now, but this expectation was not realized. Not only was there Mrs. Lorimer to be with her, but a party of friends from England, who were travelling about in the neighbourhood, swooped down upon the chalet only the day after the mountaineers had left, and they gladly accepted Lady Mary’s cordial invitation to remain her guests there for as long a time as the vacant rooms should be at their disposal.

This sudden invasion made a great deal of difference

to Squib's plans. He was no longer wanted as his mother's companion. She was busy and well looked after. Even Czar was not required now, when there were so many people about—and, indeed, the valley seemed as safe as the house at home, and the people far more honest; while all this company made the servants busy, and even Lisa's time was so fully taken up in attending to so many ladies, that she had but little of it to give to the child, and was glad for him to amuse himself in his own way.

It was quite easy for Squib to do this. Indeed, on the whole (since his mother really did not need him), he was very glad of the liberty he now enjoyed to make long expeditions with Czar, and really explore the valley from end to end. He would get something to eat packed in a little satchel in the morning—Lisa always took care that it should be something good, and that there should be plenty of it—and with this little satchel slung on his back, and his iron-pointed stick in his hand, and Czar bounding beside him, the happy little pilgrim would start off after his early breakfast, long before the visitors had thought of leaving their rooms, and would not return, save by his own wish, till the evening shadows began to lengthen, and the valley to lie wrapped in a soft, tender shade.

As for drink—was not every mountain rill a fountain for him, free from all danger of pollution? And there were scattered huts and chalets, where a drink of goat's milk could always be obtained, and Squib

soon came to have many a friend along the various routes which he pursued in turn; for all the simple peasant folk had a ready smile for the little English boy with his big, grey eyes and sunny curls, and square, quaint face so full of thoughtful curiosity.

But though the old folks always looked kindly at him, and exchanged a morning or evening greeting as he passed, Squib had as yet made no way with the bare-headed, bare-footed children who were to be seen from time to time playing round the huts. If he spoke to them they only stared, and they seemed afraid to approach Czar, who generally stood very close to his little master if there were any huts or people near. Sometimes they fled at his approach as if afraid the dog would attack them, and Squib was not able to understand their guttural exclamations as he understood the salutations of the grown-up folks. He was rather sorry for this, as he was a friendly little fellow and would have liked to fraternize with some of the children; but they were rather like little savages up here, he thought, and he went on his way solitary, but happy, satisfied with the companionship of Czar, and talking to him when the need of speech came over him.

But all this was soon to be changed.

One day Squib took a new route, and dropped almost perpendicularly, by a very tangled path, to the bottom of the valley, instead of skirting along its side as had been his fashion heretofore. It

happened to be a very warm day, and this tangled woodland path had greater attractions than those which led through stretches of sunny meadow. The sound of the brawling torrent at the bottom made refreshing music in his ears as he descended, and when at last he found himself at the bottom of the ravine, he was delighted to see that a narrow bridge of planks had been thrown across the torrent there, by which he could easily cross to the other side.

It was a dizzy crossing for any one unused to such transits, but dizziness was a feeling unknown to Squib; nor was Czar in any way disturbed by the passage. He followed his little master soberly and carefully, and in another minute both were on the opposite side of the familiar valley.

This was quite a new world for Squib, for, as is so often the way amongst these hills, one side of a valley seems to open out quite a new region, and it is not easy to believe oneself so near to old haunts.

Squib clambered up the opposite bank of the torrent, which was rather rough and stony, and then found himself at the entrance of a little wood, through which a narrow footpath ran. He followed this upwards for some distance, and found himself at last out on a green shoulder of the mountain spur, with the top of the ridge only a little above him. He must climb up and look over, he said to himself, and a few minutes' breathless clambering brought him to

the top; and now a new world, of which he had never dreamed, lay spread out before him.

From the chalet he had fancied that the range of snow-peaks opposite rose directly from the bed of the torrent he had just crossed. Now, however, he found that a whole panorama of meadow, wood, and water lay between. Sloping gently away from where he stood were emerald-green meadows full of flowers, watered by little sparkling rills and foaming cascades tumbling down the hillsides into a lake at the base as blue as the sky overhead. To the right and left the valley seemed closed in by great snow-peaks, which stood like two silent sentinels looking down upon it; and opposite to Squib were patches of cultivated land, with here and there a little peasant's chalet—the wooden roof weighted by heavy stones, piles of wood cut into lengths heaped up against the wall on the lee side, the whole house raised up on piles to keep it above the level of winter snow, and the overhanging eaves and protected gallery showing that it was lived in all the year round, and not just an abode for the summer months.

The tinkling of many bells was filling the air, and Squib's attention was speedily attracted to a herd of brown goats feeding at a little distance. Seated on a green knoll, with (oddly enough, as it seemed to Squib) a pieee of paper and a pencil in his hands, was a little boy in the rough, snuff-coloured clothes so common in the district, and a flapping felt hat

a world too large for him. He sat with his back towards the little intruder, apparently intent upon some task.

At the boy's feet lay stretched a rough-coated dog with his head on his paws. The dog seemed to be guarding both the goats and the boy, for he would rise sometimes and pursue a vagrant goat, who was in danger of straying away too far, and would make use of the opportunity for making a rapid circuit round the whole drove and addressing a word of admonition to them, after which he would return to his old position at his little master's feet.

Squib was always interested in dogs, and looked at this one with approval, holding Czar by the collar so that their proximity might not be at once divulged. It was a good-sized dog with a shaggy blue-black coat, a square head, a strong shoulder, and a look of general benevolence and intelligence.

But he was too good a watch-dog to be long without scenting out the presence of intruders, and suddenly, sighting or smelling them, broke into a succession of short, sharp barks, running towards them bristling all over.

Czar returned the challenge by uttering one of his deep bays, and this aroused the attention of the little goat-herd, who, as soon as he saw the pair on the brow of the hill, rose slowly to his feet and called to his dog in commanding tones.

Squib, holding Czar by the collar, and bidding him

be good and peaceable, went forward smilingly, and when he got nearer he saw that the little boy was a cripple, one leg being so much shorter than the other that he could only stand upright with the help of a rough little crutch. His face, too, was pinched and pale in spite of its coat of summer tan. He had a pair of big, wistful, dark eyes, but except for this the face was not remarkable in any way, the features being insignificant, and the eyelashes and brows of the same pale, sandy tint as the hair.

“Guten Tag!” (which means good-day) said Squib, gravely, and the little boy returned the salutation in the same words, whilst the two dogs eyed each other suspiciously. For a minute the two children stood looking at each other almost in the same tentative and wondering fashion, and then Squib’s face suddenly lighted with the smile which few could resist.

“Let’s sit down and talk,” he said, suiting the action to the words. “You’ve got a dog and I’ve got a dog. I think we ought to be friends.”

The little goat-herd smiled in response, and sank down upon the mossy knoll where he had been before, looking out at the little English Herr from under his sandy brows. He was not very ready with his tongue at first, but he was wooed into speech before long by Squib’s frank friendliness. He spoke a queer sort of mixed language, which Squib did not find quite easy to follow all at once; but a freemasonry was quickly

established between them, and the shaggy dog lay blinking at the little stranger, as much as to intimate that *he* understood them both.

"My dog's called Czar — what you would call Kaiser," said Squib, with his hand on Czar's great head, although the two dogs seemed to find no cause of quarrel between themselves ; "what's yours called ?"

"His name is Moor," answered the little goat-herd, "because he's black. But I often call him Ami, and that means friend—because he's the best friend I have."

"That's how I feel about Czar !" cried Squib, a link at once forming itself between the pair. "He goes everywhere with me, and they all know I am safe when Czar is there. Does Moor come out with you every day when you take the goats up here to the hill ?"

"Yes, I couldn't come here if it wasn't for Moor."

"Why not ?" asked Squib, full of interest.

"Because I'm lame. That leg isn't any use to me walking. I can get up hill with my crutch and a stick ; but I can only get down with Moor helping me. I put my leg over his back like this, and then I can hold myself up ; but I couldn't go hardly anywhere without Moor."

"Dogs are so nice and kind and sensible !" said Squib, drawing a long breath of satisfaction. "May I kiss Moor for being so good ?"

Moor submitted to the caress in pleased silence

wagging his bob-tail all the while, and he kissed Squib back again as if to ratify the compact of friendship. Then he and Czar were formally introduced, with much wagging of tails, and many snuffs, and a few dignified gambols. The two boys looked on with great interest, and Squib suddenly asked,—

“What is your name?”

“Seppi,” answered the child, “and I live over there in that house,” and he pointed to one of the chalets Squib had been observing, which were larger and more solid than the little huts for cattle which lay around his own present home.

“And do you live there always? or do you go down into the valleys in the winter?”

“Our *thal* is warm—we stay there all the year round,” answered the little boy. “The little Herr sees how it lies—all open to the warm sun in the south and west, and sheltered by the great, beautiful mountains from the cruel north. We get the snow, to be sure—and we are shut up for the winter months, except those that can go about in sledges or with their snow-shoes. But with us the winter does not last as it does in other parts. When the beautiful spring comes, and the sun looks over the mountain ridges for many long hours day by day, then the snow begins to get full of strange holes, and the ice slips down off the roof, and there is a great cracking and crashing amongst the pine trees, and the rivers begin to wake and leap into life, and the snow goes

slipping, slipping down into them, and they grow deeper and wilder and fiercer; and it seems as if the valley were full of voices and the laughter of the fairies, pushing the snow down the cascades and clapping their hands to see it swirled along in the fierce water. Then the men take up the bridges—because they would all get swept away—and for a little bit we are more shut in than ever, for it is nothing but a world of water. But the sun goes on shining, shining, shining, and then some morning we wake up and the valley is green again, and the cows and goats go out to the hill slopes, and by-and-by the cows from the valleys come up, and life begins again as it is in the happy summer-time. But yet I like the winter too. It is very beautiful, although I do miss coming out here and taking care of my goats."

All this was not said at once, but bit by bit, as Seppi sat staring straight in front of him, and seemed to see the whole scene rising before him as he conjured it up before his mental vision. Squib listened with breathless interest, seeing it all, and hearing the strange voices of the valley almost as clearly as his companion. The lake so blue and smiling now, how did it look when lashed by winter storms and filled high with masses of half-melted snow?

"Do the Seligen Fräulein play there when it is all covered with ice and snow?" he asked; but at those words his companion turned upon him a half-frightened look.

"What does the little Herr know of the Seligen Fräulein?" he asked in a low voice.

"Only what Lisa tells me," answered Squib; "that they live in the ice and the snow, and love to catch mortals and send them fast, fast asleep with their cold kisses; and that nobody ever wakes again whom they have kissed to sleep. Have you ever seen them, Seppi? Lisa never has, nor the Bergmännlein either."

Seppi shook his head as if in awed doubt. His voice was very low as he made answer,—

"I don't think that I saw them; but I was once down, down, down with them in their blue ice home."

"O Seppi!—tell me!"

"I don't know how to tell, for I could never remember. That's what everybody asks of me, but I can't tell them anything. I was crossing the glacier with father, oh, long ago now, when I was quite a little boy. He had a rope round his waist, and he had tied the end of it round mine to keep me safe. I was following behind him when my foot caught in a little crevasse in the ice, and before I could get it out the rope jerked me off my feet and along, and then suddenly I found myself falling, falling. I was going down, down, down a great, green fissure, and the rope had broken, and there was nothing to hold me. After that I don't remember anything till I woke up at home, with my leg all bound up; and ever since that it never grew any more, though I grew, and so I have been a cripple. And the people

look at me and shake their heads, and say that I have been with the ice-maidens, and that that is why I am lame ; but the good Herr Adler, he told me once that I must not think of it like that."

" Why not ? " asked Squib. " And who is the Herr Adler ? "

" He is a man of God—I don't know how else to call him," answered the child with a look of reverence upon his face. " He lives away over in your country, little Herr ; but he belongs to us too—or to Germany perhaps ; and sometimes he comes here when he wants a rest, and stays one week, or two, or three here in this thal, wandering about the valley, and thinking his beautiful thoughts about everything. He always comes and talks to me. He is good to every one he meets, but to the little children most, I think—though, to be sure, the old women say he is best to them ; and the men, that nobody understands them and their troubles like the Herr Adler. We all love him here, and count it a good summer when he comes. He was not with us last year. Perhaps God will send him to us soon."

" And what did he tell you about the ice-maidens ? " asked Squib, with great interest.

" Ah yes, that was what I was saying. I used to be frightened to think I had been with them, and the old women would shake their heads and whisper when I went by ; and I knew they were saying that there was something wrong about me, and that nobody who

had been kissed by the ice-maidens would ever live to make old bones. My mother used to cry, and I was afraid too ; for I love our green valley and happy life —I didn't want to die, or to be carried off by the Bergmännlein or the ice-maidens ; and once I was crying about it when the Herr Adler came suddenly round a corner and found me ; and when I told him all about it, he said such beautiful, good words, and now, whenever I think of them, I am not frightened any more."

" What did he say ? " asked Squib, with interest.

" Ah ! I cannot say it as he did ; but it was something like this. He spoke of the good God in the heavens up yonder, and how He had once been a child Himself, and knew all the dangers which happen to little children. And how He has told us that He loves little children, and watches over them specially, and that the beautiful angels who guard the children have a high place in heaven, and always behold the face of the Father. And he said that he thought when I was falling down, down, into the cold blue ice, that the angels must have been helping me and holding me up all the time ; for everybody said it was a miracle I was not killed, and they perhaps took care of me as I lay there not knowing anything, and helped father and the men to get me out. He said that little Christian children could not be hurt by evil spirits, unless they grew wicked and gave themselves up to evil. So now when I remember the

Herr Adler, I am not frightened any more about ice-maidens, for I think of the beautiful angels who were watching over me instead. Do you ever think about the angels, little Herr? I often do now."

"So do I," answered Squib, eagerly; "and I think they must be fond of beautiful places like this." And the children talked on and on, passing from one subject to another in rapid instinctive fashion, till the sun began to sink in the sky behind, and Squib realized with a start that he ought to be making his way home.

CHAPTER V.

COMRADES.

“ **W**ILL you be here to-morrow, Seppi ? ”

“ Yes, little Herr. I come every day with the goats. I like this place the best of any, and so do they.”

“ I shall come and see you again, then,” said Squib, with a satisfied smile.

“ Thank you, little Herr.”

“ What do you do all day when you have nobody to talk to ? Were you writing something when I saw you first ? ”

Seppi shook his head, but drew from his wallet the pencil and paper he had stowed away there when the children had shared together their mid-day meal.

“ Sometimes I try to draw a little,” he answered, with a loving look round him at the wonderful outlines of the eternal hills, glowing with the glories of the westering light. “ But all that is too big for me. I draw my goats and Moor the best. See ! ” and with a few rapid touches, which showed that there was talent in those thin brown fingers, Seppi drew a

picture of one of his own goats standing with a defiant expression on his queer, semi-human, bearded face, whilst Moor was represented admonishing him with a peremptory bark, as Squib had seen him do a dozen times that day, when some more independent goat wandered away and appeared disposed to resent his authority.

Squib laughed aloud as he watched the quickly-moving pencil.

"Oh, Seppi, how clever you are! I wish I could draw like that! Who taught you?"

"Nobody, exactly. It seems to be in my fingers. But the Herr Adler told me many things that helped, and he gave me a box of pencils when he was here last, and left me all his paper when he went away. It's nearly done now. I have to be very careful. But if he comes again this summer perhaps he'll give me some more. He is so very kind."

Squib could not linger longer. It was time he went back. But as he pursued his homeward way his face was glowing with happiness and with a generous purpose.

A new page of history had been turned before Squib's eyes that day; a new world had been opened out before him. Hitherto he had lived amongst those to whom all the good things of this world come as a matter of course. He himself had had every reasonable pleasure and enjoyment ever since he could remember, and although his nurses and parents had

told him from time to time that other little boys were not so well off as himself, he had not yet realized how wide was the gulf which separated his lot from that of the majority of those about him.

At home he had heard of poverty and trouble ; he had always been used to go in and out of the cottages on his father's estate and talk to the people in them, but he had always fancied that it must be very nice to live as they did. He found them smiling and content. He knew that in sickness and trouble they were cared for ; nothing in their condition aroused his pity or compassion. He used often to think he should like to have one of the cottages himself, and work on the farm instead of going to school. All the conditions of life which he had seen in England were too familiar to have aroused speculation, but with this little mountain goat-herd everything seemed different.

He did not quite understand what the difference was, but in talking to Seppi he had realized it more than once with singular clearness. He had gleaned that Seppi hardly knew the taste of meat, that he and all his family lived with a frugality almost unknown in England. The bit of black rye-bread and morsel of goat's cheese which had been Seppi's dinner gave him a better idea of what life in the chalets was like than he had had before. He had shared his own dainties with the wondering Seppi, who had plainly never tasted anything approaching such luxuries be-

fore, and could hardly believe that the little Herr fed like that every day. As for Squib, he had eaten a portion of the hard bread and cheese with a certain heroic relish, pleased with the novelty of sharing a real goat-herd's Swiss dinner, but he could not honestly feel that he should like such fare every day, and he secretly had no small admiration for the boy who seemed to take these things as a matter of course.

And then to think that Seppi could not even obtain pencil or paper for himself, and could indulge his favourite occupation only through the kindness of a chance visitor! Why, to Squib such things came as naturally as the food he ate or the clothes he wore. It would never have occurred to him that there could be any difficulty in getting pencils. Squib spoilt or lost a dozen pencils in the year, and as for paper—why, there was always an endless store at home. And Seppi had to be careful of his meagre supply because he could get no more unless Herr Adler came back.

The child's eyes glowed with a mixture of feelings as he realized this, and he hurried home as fast as his legs would carry him, full of a new purpose and plan.

Up to his room he hastened by the little outer stairway which was such a source of delight to him, and straight to the cupboard where all his treasures were stored. This cupboard was in a state of quaint disorder, but Squib always knew where to find what he wanted, though the object he was searching for now

was hidden away almost at the bottom of the receptacle. He drew it forth at last, however, with a look of pride and delight. It was nothing more or less than a big square sketch-book, with thick drawing-paper of different soft tints filling its stout black covers. Squib set to work to count the leaves, and found that there were fifty.

Yes, positively fifty! Fifty pages for Seppi to fill with drawings of his goats, his dog, perhaps even the outlines of the hills or the little picturesque water-troughs or bridges.

"I'm sure she won't mind when I tell her about Seppi. I never draw. I don't think I have time or know how. I'll get Seppi to give me one of his drawings for her, and when I tell her all about him and how pleased he was, I'm sure she'll be glad for him to have it."

For the sketch-book had been given to Squib by an aunt of his, who had come to say good-bye at the Chase before they all went away. He had wandered into her room one day, as he had a way of doing, and this book was lying on the table. He asked its use, and was told that it was a sketch-book, and after they had talked a little more his aunt had said he might have it, and that perhaps he would be able to bring home a few little sketches of some of the things he had seen in Switzerland, or of the chalet in which he was going to live.

Of course Squib had been delighted with his new

possession, and at the time had fancied he should draw a great deal. He was yet more sure of this when his aunt had given him a box of coloured chalks with beautiful fine points to help him with his picture-making. But somehow, since his arrival at the chalet, other interests had come uppermost, and Squib had really not thought of his sketch-book at all since he had unpacked it and put it carefully at the bottom of the cupboard, until reminded of it to-day.

Now as it lay open on his knee, and he drew out the box of chalks and looked lovingly at them—for they were very pretty—he felt a glow of pleasure in picturing the happiness they would give. It was just a little more difficult to think of parting with the chalks than with the book, but Squib would not let himself hesitate for a moment.

“ You greedy boy! ” he said aloud in a tone of stern admonition, “ you know you have got so many things yourself you don’t know hardly what to do with them all ; and Seppi has got almost nothing, and is lame, and can’t do anything but sit still all day and mind his goats. And you can’t draw a bit, hardly, and he can beautifully. You’re just to give him everything and not be a pig. I’m ashamed of you, I really am, thinking you’d like to keep those chalks yourself ! ”

And Squib shook his head quite fiercely at himself, and scrambled to his feet with sketch-book and chalks safe in his grasp. He made them up into a neat

parcel and put them into his bag, and then went off to find Lisa and tell her all about Seppi.

Lisa knew Seppi quite well, and said that he was a very good little boy, and that his parents were very honest, hard-working people. Their name was Ernsthausen, and they had lived a long time in the valley. The father went off to the mountains to act as a guide during the summer, and the mother stayed at home and cultivated their bit of land with the aid of one son and daughter, whilst little lame Seppi minded the goats and did a little wood-carving sometimes, though there was not much sale for it up here, and so many people carved nowadays that it was not always easy to get money for such work.

Squib listened with great attention and interest, many plans coming into his head the while. Perhaps he would get Seppi to give him some lessons in carving and pay him for them. He would speak to mother about it sometime, when he knew Seppi better and had time to begin. He would like to carve above everything. He had already bought a good many charming little carved-wood animals at Interlaken to give to sisters and friends at home, but to be able to carve them for himself would be yet more attractive and delightful.

Next day Squib was off betimes to his new valley, which in his mind he had already christened the Vale of the Silent Watchers. There was a vein of poetry running through Squib's nature, which helped him to

enjoy the scenes about him as he could not otherwise have done, and those two silent peaks, with their crowns of everlasting snow, looking down on the smiling valley and shutting it in (as it appeared to him) at either end, had powerfully affected his imagination. His dreams that night had all been of mountain giants and snowy solitudes, and he awoke eager to talk more with Seppi about the ideas which came crowding into his head.

Lisa packed him up a more bountiful lunch than usual, when she knew he was going to join Seppi again. The little satchel was quite heavy, what with the sketch-book and what with the dinner, but Squib was delighted at the weight of his burden, and hurried down the rough path and up the opposite side with a light heart and bounding footstep.

Seppi was there before him at the green knoll. Squib heard the sound of the goats' bells even before he reached the crest of the ridge. But this time Seppi was sitting with his face towards him, and as soon as he saw his companion of yesterday, he waved his hat and shouted a glad greeting, whilst Moor rushed forward with a sharp, joyous bark.

It was very nice to have a friend now to welcome him and to talk to. The boys met with the frank fellowship which is only possible on such short acquaintance between children.

"I've got something for you, Seppi!" cried Squib, as soon as he had disburdened himself of his satchel,

and was wiping his hot face with his pocket-handkerchief. "Would you like to see what it is?" And opening the bag, he drew out his parcel and placed it in Seppi's hands.

"Is it for me?" asked Seppi, with wide-open eyes, as though such a thing as a gift were too wonderful to be understood all at once.

"Of course it is," answered Squib, "for your very own self. I hope you'll like it. I think you will."

Squib's face was flushed with exercise and with generous pleasure. Over Seppi's had stolen a strange look of mingled wonderment and awe. In all life before (which seemed a long one to him) he never remembered receiving such a grand present as this square parcel done up in paper and string. He was almost afraid to open it, and sat clasping it between his trembling hands, till Moor pushed an inquisitive nose against it and Squib said laughingly,—

"Don't you want to see what it is, Seppi?"

Seppi would not have minded how he prolonged the exquisite pleasure of that moment, but at Squib's words he slowly began to unfasten the string and unfold the brown paper. With the same deliberate slowness and look of rapturous intentness on his face, he drew forth the square black book and the long box beside it, and with a strange, fleeting glance at Squib and a catch in his voice, he asked—

"What is it, little Herr?"

"Why, a book for you to put your pictures in, to

be sure," answered Squib, taking it for a moment into his own hands and opening it. "See, all these pages are blank—you can put in just what you want; and when you have drawn anything you can colour it if you like with these chalks. See—" and Squib took off the lid and displayed to Seppi the rows of graduated pointed chalks all ready for use, and of all colours that a young artist could want.

Seppi turned from red to pale and from pale to red. It seemed as if he could hardly believe his eyes or his ears; but that he understood the nature of the gift was plain from the emotion which it excited in him.

"For me! for me!" he kept saying almost under his breath. "Oh, I can't believe it; I can't understand it; it is too wonderful altogether."

Squib was greatly delighted at the success of his experiment. He could not get Seppi all at once to begin drawing in his book. It was too beautiful to be done anything with save to be looked at and caressed. But when the first stress of emotion had passed, Squib got the boy to make a picture of Moor and two of the goats upon the brown paper of the wrapper, and to colour them with the chalks, thereby producing a picture which so delighted him that he begged to have it to take home to his mother and Lisa.

Seppi was like a boy in a dream all that day. He sat gazing out at the mountains with his very soul in his eyes, and by-and-by Squib drew from him the fact of his intense longing to put on paper those familiar

and well-loved outlines, only his attempts hitherto with his imperfect materials had resulted always in disheartening failure.

Squib, however, explained eagerly that on thick paper, and with chalks to give effects of colour, it would be far easier to draw mountains than in pencil on flimsy bits of shiny writing paper; and when at their dinner hour Squib showed him that bread crumbs would rub out pencil marks from paper without leaving a trace behind, Seppi consented at last, although in visible fear and trembling, to try to put upon paper the outlines of the familiar ridge of snow-capped hills under whose shadow he had been born and brought up.

Breathlessly one boy worked and the other watched. Seppi had the gift of an inborn talent; Squib had had a little technical training, and had always been keenly observant, besides possessing a retentive memory. All his small store of knowledge and recollection was brought out in aid of Seppi's efforts, and the picture slowly grew and grew to the delight and wonder of both.

When it came to the use of the chalks—putting the snow-white crowns to the mountain tops, the green slopes, the bold dashes of red where here and there the sun struck hot on some ruddy rocks and made them glow like fire—the excitement became intense. Seppi drew his breath hard as he worked, and Squib kept up a running commentary of advice,

observation, and enthusiastic praise. Whatever the picture might have appeared to an outsider, to the vivid imaginations of the children it was a marvellous reproduction of the scene. Why, even Seppi's brown chalet, with its wood-stacks and boundary walls were all there in place, and the green-blue glacier away to the right was seen creeping down the hillside at the corner.

"It is quite splendid," cried Squib at last, warned by the rosy flush in the sky that he must be going. "O Seppi, you *are* clever! I wish I could draw like you! But never mind, if you can do it that is just the same. I'll watch you, and some day you shall do me a picture to take to Aunt Adela—it was she who gave me the sketch-book to draw in—and she'll see how clever you are, and how nice it is for you to have a book to keep your drawings in."

If this new amusement made such a mark in Squib's history just at this time, what must it have done in Seppi's?

By the time Squib had reached the Vale of the Silent Watchers next day, Seppi had been hard at work for above an hour giving loving touches to his picture of the night before, trying effects and making little studies upon the bits of paper in which Squib's dinner of yesterday had been wrapped, every one of which had been eagerly kept and hoarded by Seppi.

And now a new life began for both the boys, between

whom such a bond of fellowship had been formed. Squib confided his ambition of learning to carve to Seppi, and Seppi, delighted to do anything for one to whom he felt he owed such a debt of gratitude, assured him that it was quite easy to learn to carve little animals and so forth, and offered to teach him the art so far as he knew it himself.

A compact was soon made. Squib had more than one knife, and one of almost perilous excellence, given him by Uncle Ronald. Seppi could bring him any number of little blocks of wood which had been rudely shaped by himself at home, and for which Squib insisted on paying at what seemed to the little goat-herd to be fabulous rates. But Squib had his own views on these matters and was very resolute.

" You shall teach me to carve if you will," he said, "and I won't pay you for that, because we're friends. But I will pay for the wood, because I want you to have some money to get paper or chalks with when these are done and when I've gone away. My father and mother give me money, you see, and I haven't anything particular to do with it. I want to buy your wood, and you must let me, please."

Then, these preliminaries being amicably settled, the two boys would pass whole days together in that sunny, quiet valley, the one intent upon his pictures, ever learning, ever finding fresh facilities in the use of his new materials; the other, equally engrossed with his knife and wood, appealing con-



"Breathlessly one boy worked and the other watched."

stantly to his patient teacher for hints and instruction, but showing an aptitude for form and a dexterity of manipulation which excited Seppi's honest admiration.

Very happy were those days of cloudless sunshine, when it was almost too hot for Squib to ramble far afield, and when sitting beside Seppi in the shade of the pine woods, watching him draw, and carving busily at his growing family of goats and dogs, was the pleasantest thing he could find to do.

When not too much engrossed in their tasks, the children would talk together of all the thoughts and fancies in their heads. Seppi caught at Squib's fancy about the Silent Watchers of the Valley with the eagerness of a true son of the mountain. He had not the same power of expression that Squib could boast. He could describe what he had seen or heard, but found it less easy to put into words his own imaginings; but he hailed with delight any fanciful idea of the little Herr's, and they soon began to live in a world and atmosphere of their own, which comes so readily to those upon whom the spell of the mountains has fallen.

Squib had many fancies about that rugged range opposite. He fancied it the home of a great mountain giant, who dwelt in some mighty caverns within. When the echoes of the valley would be awakened by the fall of great avalanches into some far-away and unseen valleys on the opposite slope, he would lift his head and cry,—

"Hark! there is the giant playing bowls in his cave!"

And when little cloud-wreaths circled about the tops of the ridge, or lay idly along the hollows, he would pull Seppi by the sleeve and say,—

"See, the giant is smoking his pipe to-day! You can see the smoke coming out at the cracks!"

There was endless amusement and variety for Squib in that peaceful vale overlooked by those Silent Watchers, who, he was sure, regarded him and his comrade with protecting kindness and an especial favour. When it was not too hot, or he was not too busy, he would stroll down to the bed of the stream below, where a great flat stone rising high out of the water gave him a little island home of his own. A willow tree had sprouted out from a fissure in the stones, and hung over the rock, affording shelter from the sun. Within this little green retreat Squib passed many a happy hour, sitting very quiet, looking down into the sparkling depths of the dimpling water, and listening to the numberless tales it told him.

Sometimes strange changes would occur to that friendly stream, even as he lay watching it and listening to its never-ceasing babble. It would suddenly rise and swell, and down from the heights above would come tossing and foaming a great surging volume of water, sometimes brown and turbid, sometimes clear and sparkling, laughing, playing, foaming, and shouting as it raced onwards to the lake below.

And Seppi would explain to Squib afterwards that that happened with a sudden fall of snow or ice into the stream above. It would perhaps remain there in a mass for a day or two; then the hot sunshine would strike it and melt it with wonderful rapidity, and the volume of water suddenly set at liberty would come tearing down the rivulet to swell the stream and rush helter-skelter to the lake.

This thought made it all the more interesting when it happened again, and Squib would lean over his rock and watch the quick rise of the water, and the swirl and thunder of the miniature cascades, and say to himself,—

“The giant has been throwing his snowballs about, and the sun is driving the ice-maidens deeper and deeper into their caverns. Perhaps the giant throws the snowballs after them to make them run away quicker! I wonder if I should ever see them if I were to be here in the long cold winter, when they fly about touching everything with their wands, and sending all the world to sleep till the sun comes to wake it. They must be very beautiful with their white robes and crystal crowns, and sceptres tipped with moonlight; but I think they are rather cruel, too. Perhaps it is better to come when they are driven back into their green caverns, and can only hurt the people who seek them there.”

As time went on Squib began to know all about Seppi, though to be sure there was not much to know in that very simple and uneventful life.

It was as Lisa had said. His father, who knew the mountains well, went out every year through all the summer months as a guide; and Seppi said his mother always cried each time he went away, because she knew he might never live to come back again. Every year many brave men lost their lives on the mountains, and skill and strength were often of no avail against the reckless hardihood of inexperienced and rash travellers, who would not listen to advice, and who risked other lives besides their own in their folly and pride. Nevertheless, hitherto the good God had always preserved him, and brought him safely home again, and his wife and children prayed every day that he might be kept from all peril.

At home there was Peter to help mother in the fields, and Ann-Katherin, the little sister, who helped at home, and was Seppi's chief comrade and sympathiser, as Squib quickly gathered, though Seppi himself did not appear to be given to comparisons.

Peter was older than Seppi by one year, and very much taller and stronger. He was now twelve, and was looking forward to the time when he should be a man and could go out first as porter and then as guide, and leave the monotonous life of the valley for something more stirring. But for himself Seppi had no such desire, even had it been possible for him to think of an active life. He and Ann-Katherin loved their home and their valley with a love too strong for expression—a love which had grown with their growth

and strengthened with their strength till it had become an essential part of their nature. Squib thought he could understand that feeling. He felt that if he had lived in this place he should never want to leave it. He remembered how Lisa used to cry when she told him of her mountain home, and how he had longed to see it for himself. Gradually as he grew to understand the life led by the peasants, its hardness and poverty, and yet its quiet contentment and business, a feeling came over him that it was a good life to lead—that a little with peace and contentment was far better than the feverish discontent that was always striving after more, even at the expense of the weaker ones who must of necessity “go to the wall” in the struggle.

Squib was too young to enter with any real comprehension into the burning questions of the day, but he was too observant and quick not to have caught up some notions from the talk he heard amongst his elders from time to time.

“I like your country,” he said one day to Seppi very seriously; “I think it’s a good country to live in. I wish our people in England would come and see you and learn to be like you. You don’t waste things, and you don’t grumble. You haven’t any workhouses and poor-laws; and you don’t seem to want them. You may be poorer than English people, but you’re much happier. I think it’s happiness that is the real thing. I wish we were as happy as you.”

CHAPTER VI.

HERR ADLER.

SQUIB was sitting on his favourite stone in the middle of the brawling stream. He had left Seppi absorbed in one of his most ambitious attempts at sketching—so much absorbed that conversation for the time being was impossible. When that sort of thing happened, Squib generally wandered down to “his island,” as he had come to call it. He liked to sit here in the midst of the tossing and foaming water, and think of all the things that came crowding into his head—that seemed to him often like the talk of the water as it leaped and rushed onward down its rough bed. To-day its voice was softer and quieter than it had been when first he heard it. The fine weather had lasted long now, and the water no longer raved and foamed, and dashed itself about like a wild thing. Where the stones impeded its course it broke into spray and ran foaming in little cascades, or leaped like a live thing into the air; but there were other places where it flowed quietly between its green banks, making a placid murmur of content; and Squib

would lean over his rock and listen to the many voices, and dream all sorts of dreams for which he never could have found words.

Czar sat on the bank with his head on his paws, and blinked contentedly at his little master. Czar seldom crossed to the island, unless especially invited. He did not find enough room there to dispose his big limbs in comfort, nor were the slippery stepping-stones or the bed of the stream much to his mind. He preferred to keep a watchful eye upon his charge from the bank, and Squib had ceased to try to tempt him across.

Now all this time Squib had never seen anybody in his quiet valley except Seppi himself. He had come to regard it almost as his own little kingdom, much as he did his favourite haunts at home, where he and Czar reigned supreme. True, there was a rough, overgrown path along the margin of the stream, but he had never seen a living creature treading it, nor had the sound of a human voice ever broken in upon his solitary musings; so that it was with a feeling of great surprise that he suddenly saw Czar rear himself up on his haunches to-day, and give one of those deep bays that he uttered at home when somebody strange passed near his kennel at night. Squib himself sat up to listen, and soon heard the sound of an approaching脚步. The steps seemed to be coming towards him through the little wood opposite. Czar bayed again, and put up the rough all down his back.

"Quiet, Czar, quiet," said Squib in his commanding way. "This isn't our wood really. You mustn't be angry if other people come. We're not the masters here."

The hound ceased baying at the word of command, and wagged the tip of his tail as much as to say that he understood and would obey; but he still stood very erect and bristling, his great eyes, with the red gleam in them, fixed intently upon the spot whence the sounds came. The little boy also watched with considerable curiosity, and thought that the traveller, whoever he was, did not seem in any hurry. He must be walking very leisurely.

The steps came nearer and nearer, the brushwood moved and rustled, and then the traveller came into view, and Squib saw him quite clearly. It was a gentleman—not a peasant—as Squib saw at a glance. He wore a long grey coat, and a soft black hat was on his head. His head was bent as though in thought, or in close observation of the things about him, and his hands were loosely clasped behind his back. He must be old, Squib decided at the first glance, for his hair and beard were quite white; but when, at the sound of Czar's short explosive bark, he suddenly raised his head and Squib saw his face clearly, he never thought again about his being old, for it was such a kind, good face, and the look in the clear blue eyes was so friendly and gentle, that the child's heart went out to him at once. He knew instantly that here was somebody "nice."

"Don't be afraid of my dog, sir," he called out in German; "he won't hurt you. It's only because he's so surprised to see anybody here. Generally we are all alone all the time.—Be quiet, Czar," he added sternly to the dog, "I won't have you make that noise."

The traveller looked up at the child, perched upon his mimic throne in the midst of the stream, and a smile of amusement and friendly interest dawned slowly over his face.

"And who may you be, my little man?" he asked, speaking in English, although there was something in the accent which told Squib that it was not his native tongue. "Are you a water-sprite? And is this your faithful guardian?" and he held out his hand to Czar, who came slowly up to him, sniffed at his hand and his coat, and then lay down again with his head on his paws, quite content with his investigation.

"He likes you," cried Squib, skipping across the stones towards the stranger, to whom he felt curiously drawn; "he doesn't like many people. Generally he's very suspicious for a long time, but he's not suspicious of you. Some people think he's a very fierce dog, and are afraid of him; but you weren't afraid, were you?"

"I didn't know he was fierce," answered the stranger, smiling and patting Czar's great head, while the dog wagged his tail benevolently. "It is not worth while to be afraid of a danger beforehand. Is your dog very clever as well as very fierce?"

"I don't know," answered Squib. "Czar understands me, I think, but I don't think he's particularly clever. Ought he to be, do you think?"

"I am not sure. Sometimes when dogs are fierce and clever both, they can be very dangerous. Shall I tell you a story I heard not very long ago about a dog that was both, and what he did?"

"Oh, if you please, sir," answered Squib, who delighted in an animal story whenever he could hear one.

"I am not sure what kind of dog it was, but I think it was a hound of some sort. A farmer had it who lived in a lonely place. He wanted a rather fierce dog to guard his house at night and be about the place by day. He had a daughter who was fond of the creature, and it would obey her, and she looked after it, and called it in when any person came up to the farm and was afraid of the dog. It seemed fond of her, and she was fond of it."

"I don't quite know how long it was after the dog came, but at any rate by-and-by the shepherd came to tell the farmer that every night a sheep was missing from the flock. He kept a close watch and found out that it was a dog that came every night, ran down and killed a sheep, and ate a part of the carcass. In the dark he was not able to see exactly what kind of dog it was, but he said that it looked to him like the hound the farmer had bought. This, however, seemed impossible, for the hound slept in the kitchen and

was locked in there every night, and was always safe there each morning, doors and windows being all locked. But still the sheep were killed night by night, and still the shepherd declared himself more and more certain that the hound was the culprit."

"Oh, what a wicked dog!" cried Squib, drawing a long breath; "but I think these dogs could be very fierce if once they had begun to do things like that. Please go on, sir."

"Well, the thing was getting so serious that the farmer said something must be done, and his daughter suggested that she should sleep one night in the kitchen, where the dog stayed, and really see if it was possible that he could get in and out. So that night she made up a bed on the old settle that stood in the kitchen, and when the time came she fastened herself in and went to bed. The dog lay in front of the fire as usual, and looked as if he never meant to move all night. The girl was getting very drowsy, when she fancied she heard the dog move cautiously. There was enough light from the fire for her to be able to see what went on in the kitchen, and very soon she saw that the dog had got up and was looking at her intently. She closed her eyes almost, just peeping out through the lids, and breathed heavily as if she were asleep. The dog came stepping up to her very, very quietly, and she felt his breath on her cheek as he seemed to be actually sniffing at her to make sure she was asleep. She was almost afraid of

him then, there seemed something unnatural about him ; but she lay perfectly still, and he seemed to be satisfied. Then she felt him move away, and just opening her eyes a little she saw him go across to a window, rather high up in the wall, that was fastened by a little bolt. The dog got upon the window seat, unfastened the bolt with his teeth, pulled the window open by the bolt, and sprang out into the night with a curious whimpering sound like that of a wolf. The girl lay quite still, rather frightened, but resolved to see the thing through, and in about an hour or more, I don't know how long it might be, the dog came back. He sprang through the window, pushed it to, drew the bolt again with his teeth, and then turned round to look at her, and she saw that there was blood round his mouth."

"He had killed a sheep!" cried Squib under his breath. "Oh, what a wicked dog!"

"Yes, he had killed a sheep ; but he was able to do worse than that. For the girl had been so astonished to see the creature's cleverness in getting in and fastening up the window, that she was sitting up in bed to watch him, when he turned round and saw her. It seemed then as if he were clever enough to know himself found out, for suddenly his eyes grew fierce and red, and he made a roaring noise like that of a wild beast. The girl sprang from her bed, and had just time to reach the door before he made his spring ; she knew that had she been a moment

later he would have flown at her throat. She saw by his eyes, and heard in that horrid roaring noise he made, that he would have flown at her and killed her had she not been able to escape."

"Oh, what a dreadful dog!" cried Squib, his eyes fixed upon the face of the narrator with the gaze of fascination. "What did the farmer do with him then?"

"Of course he was shot in the morning, and no sheep were killed after that. It had been this clever dog that had done it all the time, just as the shepherd believed."

"Oh, sir, I am glad Czar is not fierce like that. Do you think that is a true story?"

"It was told me as true," answered the stranger, "and I have heard other stories of hounds that have been known to be terribly fierce and savage when their jealousy has been aroused. And I can quite believe that if a dog once took to killing and eating sheep, the wild beast in him would get the upper hand very quickly, and he would soon be quite unsafe."

"I suppose that's what father feels about Czar. I've heard him say that if he ever did bite anybody he would have to be shot. That's why I try so hard to make him kind and good to people. I should be so sorry if he got fierce, he's such a nice dog to have with one in a lonely place. I think a dog is great company. But Czar doesn't like my island, it's too small and slippery for him. Would you like to see my island, sir? It's such a nice place. Shall I help

you across to it ? The stones are rather slippery, but there are not many of them."

Squib received a friendly smile and nod in reply, and found that the stranger was quite able to make his way over the stepping-stones without assistance. The little boy showed all the wonders and beauties of his mimic kingdom with great pride: the little delicate flowers shooting up from the crevices filled with earth, the willow tree growing out of the solid stone, as it appeared, and the beautiful green moss which clothed the sides of the boulder. The traveller was *such* a nice person to show things to and to tell things to ! He was interested in everything, and had a hundred wonderful things to say about the island—things which Squib himself had hardly observed, and which had never struck him as they did now. Very soon Squib found that it was he who was listening and his new friend who was talking, telling him about the wonderful way in which the rocks were made, what sand was, what chalk was, how the world had come to be the wonderful and beautiful place it was. Squib listened as he listened to Lisa's tales of fairies and goblins, and found it just as interesting. No matter whether they spoke of rocks or flowers or trees, or the rushing, tumbling water, there was always something wonderful to be learned, and presently Squib drew a long breath and said,—

"Oh, sir, I never knew before what a wonderful place my island was really!"

A very kind smile shone in the stranger's eyes as he answered,—

"And you will find more and more wonders there every day of your life, my child; and if you go through the world with open eyes, you will find that it is full, crowded, with the most wonderful things, of which you will be able to learn only a little here and a little there. But the wonder and the beauty will fill your heart, and make you very happy in the thought that some day it will be given to us, we hope and believe, to understand much, much more of all these wonders than we can ever hope to do now."

Squib looked up at him quickly, not quite certain of his meaning. He hardly knew whether the next words were an answer to his unspoken question.

"You know, my child, that the world is full of the wonders of God. Everything speaks of Him to those who have ears to hear. That is why I think we can never know more than just a very little of all these wonders till we know Him in His glory."

Squib looked up into the kind face, and saw there a look which drew him like a magnet, he could not have said why. He instinctively slipped his hand within that of his new friend, and said with sudden conviction,—

"I think you must be Herr Adler."

The stranger put his head on one side and looked at the child smilingly.

"Now what fairy or little bird has whispered that to you?"

"Neither," answered Squib laughing; "it came into my head from something that Seppi said. He told me about Herr Adler. He called him a man of God. I didn't know what he meant. And then he said that everybody in the valley felt better and happier when he had been there. I think I understand now. I am sure you must be Herr Adler."

A hand was laid for a moment on Squib's head in a touch that felt in some way like a blessing. Then Herr Adler said,—

"So you know my little friend Seppi, do you? I was on my way to find him when I fell in with another little boy friend."

Squib looked up brightly.

"I should like to be your friend. I didn't know little boys could count as friends with grown-up people. Seppi and I are great friends. I go and see him almost every day. He draws all sorts of things. He is very clever, and he teaches me to carve animals and things for the children at home. Will you come and see him now? He will be *so pleased!*"

"Yes, I should like to go if you will take me. And you shall show me your carving and Seppi's drawings. But you must tell me your name if we are to be friends, for I am not such a clever guesser as you."

"Oh, as for that, they just call me Squib at home."

"Squib! Why, isn't that a sort of firework? Now, didn't I say you were a sprite? I suppose when you get tired of being here you just set yourself alight and go fizzling back into elf-land."

Squib laughed delightedly.

"I wish I could! It would be jolly to go fizzling through the air and get somewhere you don't know how! I should like that awfully! But you see I can't. People can't do that, can they?"

"I only heard of one man who did it and lived to tell the tale. It was at that wonderful siege of Antwerp, of which you will read when you grow up, when the citizens tried to blow up the bridge the Spaniards had thrown across the mouth of the Scheldt. In that terrific explosion there was one man lifted up off his feet, and taken right across that wide river and set down on the opposite side without being hurt, and he told his friend afterwards that all the while he believed himself a sky-rocket going off, and felt no fear, having no time or breath to think of anything as he was hurled through the air. Many people have been blown into the air, but very few have lived to say what it feels like afterwards."

Squib listened with the concentrated attention which was one of his characteristics, and asked some questions about the bridge and the explosion, which led to a story from Herr Adler of such thrilling interest that they had almost reached Seppi's knoll before the little boy realized it. What brought him

back out of the past to the present was the sound of a joyful cry and as joyful a bark. Moor came bounding down the slope and made such a jump at Herr Adler that he was almost able to lick his face, whilst Seppi was scrambling down the greensward with a rapidity Squib had never seen in his movements before.

"Well, good creature! well, good creature!" said Herr Adler, caressing the eager and delighted dog.

"How well he knows you! How he remembers you!" cried Squib, looking on with a beaming smile. "Seppi, I have found Herr Adler! Here he is. He was coming to look for you, and I showed him the way."

Then he stood aside and watched the meeting, noting the rapture of welcome in Seppi's face which he could not put into words, but which brought the tears into his eyes, and thinking what a beautiful, kind face Herr Adler had as he stood talking to the little boy, holding his thin hands all the while, and asking him of his mother, his family and home, and how things had gone with them during the past winter.

Herr Adler spoke Seppi's country patois as easily as he spoke English, and whilst he talked to Seppi, Moor kept putting up his paws and stuffing his nose into his hand to try to attract attention, and win one of those quiet caresses and kind words of which Herr Adler had many to give him.

After a little while they all moved up again towards the knoll in the pleasant shade of the pine trees, and Squib set himself to gather together Seppi's chalks and papers, which, in his delight at seeing Herr Adler, he had cast hither and thither in uncemonious fashion.

"Do look at Seppi's drawings, Herr Adler!" cried the little boy, as he took the sketch-book to his new friend; "doesn't he draw beautifully? Hasn't he got on well?" and he turned the leaves with pride, whilst Seppi sat with crimson cheeks, as though almost afraid to draw breath till he heard what the Herr thought of his work.

Herr Adler looked through the book very carefully, and said many kind things about the progress Seppi had made. But he also pointed out many faults in his work, and generally showed him how to avoid that fault another time. He also told Seppi that he did better when he took easy subjects, such as a goat, or a few ferns growing out of some stones, or a single clump of flowers, and advised him to give up for a time trying to make pictures of the great mountains and valleys, because he had not sufficient knowledge for that yet, but to content himself with progressing a step at a time, and then he would gradually find himself farther and farther along the road, and be able to succeed with larger things as his skill increased. But he said it all so kindly, and with so many illustrations and stories interspersed, that Seppi was not

one whit discouraged, laughed quite merrily over some of his own obvious failures with difficult subjects, and agreed that it was far better to succeed with some study than to make a grand-looking daub which had so many glaring faults in it.

Squib thought it was very good and humble of Seppi to be willing to set aside the sort of drawing he loved so much.

"I think it was my fault that he stopped doing goats and things and did the mountains," he remarked. "I wanted him to get on, and to be a great artist and make grand pictures. It seems tiresome always doing easy little things, and I thought his pictures were so very good."

"I knew they weren't," said Seppi softly. "I liked doing them; it gave me such nice thoughts about what I should like them to be. But now when I look at them I can see they are frightful. I will go back to my goats!"

Herr Adler looked at Squib with one of his kind smiles, and said,—

"What do you think it is to be a great artist, my little firework friend?"

"Oh, why, to paint great big pictures that everybody looks at and talks about, isn't it, sir?"

An amused look crept into Herr Adler's eyes.

"That would be a very easy way of getting to be a great artist. I think even you or I could paint a great monster picture that everybody

would stare at who saw it, because it would be so bad."

"Oh, I didn't mean that," answered Squib laughing; then he paused, looked into Herr Adler's face, and said, "Tell me what you call a great picture, please."

Then Herr Adler's blue eyes seemed to look out beyond the faces of his listeners in a way Squib quickly came to know well, and he answered,—

"I think that a great picture is one into which the painter has put something of his own self—his own soul—as well as that thing which he has tried to draw; something which lifts us up above just the thing itself, and makes us feel a breath from the world of nature, or draws our hearts and thoughts upwards towards the Maker of the world. It need not be a large, grand, ambitious work to do that; but it must be the best that the painter has to offer—and it must breathe the spirit of truth."

Seppi's face suddenly kindled and glowed.

"Oh, I think I know what you mean!" he cried.
"Oh, how I wish that you painted pictures!"

Squib was not sure that he did quite understand, but he liked to hear Seppi and Herr Adler talk, and meantime he busied himself in unpacking the luncheon and in spreading it invitingly upon green leaves on their stone table. Lisa had given him a generous supply of provisions that day, and there was enough and to spare for all. Herr Adler told them many

stories as they sat and ate ; and then Squib rose and said good-bye for that day, as he thought that Seppi might have things to say to Herr Adler that he would not care for anybody else to hear.

" If I had anything troubling me, I'm sure I should like to tell Herr Adler about it," he said to himself as he fastened up his satchel. " I think perhaps Seppi would like to talk to him alone. I'll go home now ; but I hope I shall see Herr Adler again."

" Are you going to shoot yourself off, my little friend ? " said Herr Adler, as Squib came up with outstretched hand.

" I think I must go back home now," answered the little boy ; " but I hope you'll come again to our valley, sir, and have lunch with us, and tell us some more of your stories."

" That I will with pleasure," answered Herr Adler. " This valley and I are old friends. When I am far away in quite different places, I often shut my eyes and see it all again : the green slopes with the rocks and the pine trees lying in the sunlight, and those two great white peaks towering above, sometimes dazzlingly white, and sometimes blushing red in the sunset."

" I call them the Silent Watchers," said Squib, looking from one to the other, " because they seem always to be watching. Perhaps you can tell us a story about them some day."

Herr Adler smiled very kindly.

"I am not sure that I know any story about them ; but I used to be very fond of a certain walk up towards the glacier under one of them. If I am not too old and you are not too young, perhaps you and I might find our way there one of these fine days."

"Oh, I should like that !" answered Squib with a beaming face ; " I have so often wanted to go nearer and see the glacier. Father and Uncle Ronald say that I walk very well. I hardly ever get tired ; and they have taken me to a lot of places."

"Then we will think about it," answered Herr Adler ; and Squib went home with a happy heart, feeling that something new and interesting had come into his life.

Next day he started off early for the valley, and found Seppi there as usual, hard at work drawing. But the chalks and sketch-book had been laid aside, and the little goat-herd was making careful studies from his own flock on odd bits of paper ; and so earnest was he over his task, that Squib had sat some few minutes looking over his shoulder before he was aware of his presence.

"O Seppi, you *are* clever !" cried the admiring Squib, as he took up the little studies one after the other, laughing heartily at some of them, where a goat was depicted in the act of butting its fellow, or executing some antic over a jutting rock.

"No, no," answered Seppi quickly ; "don't praise me any more, little Herr. It makes me conceited,

and that spoils my work. I'm not clever. I began to think I was; but when I saw Herr Adler looking at my drawings, then I knew how bad they were, and I was horribly ashamed of them! When you were gone I told him so; and do you know what he said?"

"What?" answered Squib eagerly.

Seppi paused awhile, and then replied,—

"I can't say it after all; I mean not as he did. The words are quite different when he says them. You know what I mean, don't you? But it was something like this—that our lives were somehow like my drawings. We tried to make them good and beautiful and clever, and sometimes thought we were getting on and doing something fine. But when God came and looked at all we had done, we should just feel as though it was—oh, so worthless and poor and bad! not because He would not accept it from us, but because we should feel it all so dreadfully unworthy to offer."

Squib looked grave and a little puzzled.

"I never thought of things that way," he answered; "I wish I'd heard Herr Adler talk about it. But I don't see how *he* can feel that. He is so very good."

"Oh yes," answered Seppi earnestly; "I think he's the best man in all the world. Everybody here knows that he is a man of God."

"What *is* being a man of God, Seppi?" asked Squib curiously.

Seppi found that rather a hard question to answer.
“I can’t tell,” he replied; “one feels it somehow. And then Herr Adler has talked sometimes to me about the Kingdom. That helps to make one feel it. It is all so very beautiful.”

“Tell me,” said Squib drawing nearer, “what is the Kingdom?”

“I’m not sure that I can explain. I can’t say things right even when I seem to feel them inside of me. Herr Adler says that the Bible tells us that some day Jesus Christ will come back again and reign on earth; and that all things will be made new and beautiful; and that His saints will reign with Him. You know about the servants who had the money, and some did well with it and had cities to rule over, and one did nothing and had his money taken away. Herr Adler thinks it will be like that with us. If we use what is given us now, and do our very best with it, we shall have things set us to do in the Kingdom; but if we have wasted it all, or done nothing, then we shall not be fit to help, and nothing will be trusted to us. It doesn’t matter what it is that we do, however little the talent is. If we do our best with it, and do not waste or bury it, we shall use it again—oh, so much better then! I can’t say it as he does. But I feel it is all true; so I’m not going to try any more to do things much too difficult for me. That’s not getting on; I think that’s just conceit. I’m going to draw the things I can do, and do them

as well as ever I can. I want to make a lot of little pictures from my goats ; and then put them together in one big picture to give Herr Adler before he goes."

This was a very long speech for Seppi to make, and it was not made all at once, but just a bit at a time as he sat looking out before him, with Squib at his side looking earnestly into his face as though to learn all his meaning and encourage him to proceed. The magnitude of the thoughts suggested was rather much for his brain, although he apprehended much of it with the quick intuition of childhood. But Seppi's last words suggested a new train of thought ; and Squib answered eagerly,—

" Oh yes, you do that ! Make him a beautiful picture of your goats and the valley and the Silent Watchers—"

" No, no, no !" cried Seppi almost vehemently. " Not the valley and the mountains. I can't do them. Just a group of my own goats, with Moor watching them, and some stones and flowers in front, and just a rift in the sky behind, and the light coming through. I can see it all—if only I could do it ! But it shan't be anything grand. I should only get all into a muddle ! I'll do it all again and again in pencil ; and then I'll try the chalks for the colours of the goats and the sky and the flowers."

" And I'll carve him something !" cried Squib, fired by sudden desire. " I'll make him a carving of Czar ! I think he'll like Czar when he knows him. He likes

Moor, and Moor is very fond of him. Perhaps I'll do Moor and Czar playing together. They do have great games. I wonder if I could do that."

"Try something easy, and do it well," advised Seppi, with the touch of diffidence he always showed in offering an opinion of his own to the little gentleman. He admired Squib with all his heart, and thought him wonderfully clever, but he knew that his carving was crude and unfinished, and that a group of dogs at play was far beyond his powers.

Squib, however, set to work with great zeal, shaping a bit of wood to his purpose, and chatting gaily all the while; and Seppi was soon lost again in his work—studying the attitudes of his goats as he had never studied them before, and learning new things about them every hour.

"Oh!" he cried at last, throwing down his pencil almost in tears; "I hardly believed it when he said it; but it seems as if there were never any end of learning about the least thing in the world! I've been with goats all my life, and I don't know yet what they're like!"

CHAPTER VII.

HAPPY HOURS.

“**H**ERE he is ! Here he is !” cried Squib, starting to his feet ; and at that cry Seppi looked up, and with a beaming face began hastily collecting together his scattered studies, putting them away in the little satchel kept for the purpose. As for Squib, he was already a hundred yards away, dashing along like a veritable firework till he pulled up short, close beside the stranger in the long coat, who was not a stranger to him now.

Moor had been quicker still, and was capering round Herr Adler in an ecstasy of welcome, whilst Czar came up with an air of friendly patronage, and sniffed at the outstretched hand quite affably.

“O sir, I am so glad you have come ! Seppi and I have been counting the days and wondering.”

“You see I have a good many friends to visit when I get into these parts,” answered Herr Adler, smiling ; “I have been making a little round of old acquaintances. And have you been here every day, cheering up my little friend Seppi ?”

"I like to come," answered Squib; "Seppi and I are great friends. I think Seppi is a very nice boy. He is so good and patient about being lame. I should think it must be so very hard to be lame. Don't you?"

"Yes, I think it is one of the greatest trials that a boy can have to bear; and Seppi was quite strong and active before the accident that lamed him, as I dare say he has told you. But still he has a beautiful place to live in, and his friends the goats to amuse him, and his drawing and his carving which occupy his hands. And this summer it seems he has another little friend to cheer him up. I am very pleased about that, for his life out here is rather lonely, though he is so fond of it."

"Yes; you see Peter and Ann-Katherin are wanted at home. They can only spare Seppi to mind the goats. And then he has Moor, and Moor is a very nice dog. A dog is a very good kind of—of—*person* to talk to when you've got nobody else. I know that by Czar. I often think he's nicer than lots of the people one sees. I like dogs. They can't talk, to be sure, but they try with their eyes and their ears and their tails. I can have quite nice talks with the dogs at home, out in the fields. We had a lot of fox-terrier puppies in the spring. I used to have them all out together, with Czar to take care of them, and teach them things. It was great fun. You know dogs are just as different as people are. They look all alike just

at first; but they aren't a bit really. They're just as different as children are when you get to know them."

"Some people find children very much alike," answered Herr Adler with a smile. "I had a dear old friend, a professor, who married rather late in life. He had some dear little children, but his wife thought that their noise would trouble him, so she kept them very much in the nursery, and when they came down to see papa, they were as still and quiet as so many little mice. The professor was very absent and very short-sighted, and often up in the clouds, as we say; but all the same he had a very tender heart, and would have liked to see more of his children, only, somehow, they never seemed to be there. One day he was walking up and down in some public gardens belonging to the row of houses where he lived. He very seldom went there, but to-day he had gone in, and by-and-by he saw some children at play, and grew interested in them and talked kindly to them, and even joined in their game. And when he went away he saw one little girl looking up with a very sweet and half-wistful smile into his face, and he bent down to kiss her, and said, 'Well, my little darling, whose little girl are you?' and she cried out, 'Yours, papa!'-and sure enough it was his own little girls, as well as some others, with whom he had been playing, and he had never known them in their hats and coats, laughing and chatting as they never did at home.

That was a funnier thing than for people not to know little puppy dogs one from the other!"

"What a funny man!" cried Squib. "Didn't he laugh when he found out?"

"I dare say he did, and perhaps after that he played more with his children, and taught them not to be afraid of him. But when people are absent and forgetful they do very funny things. I heard of an officer once who rode into his stable-yard and called out angrily to his men, 'I can't find my horse anywhere! What have you fellows done with him? Go and bring him out to me at once!'"

"And he was on his back all the time!" cried Squib with a hearty laugh of delight. "Oh, I like that story; it's better than the people who hunt everywhere for their spectacles when they are on their noses all the time! You must tell Seppi about that. I am sure it would make him laugh too."

Seppi's face was beaming with pleasure by the time Herr Adler reached the knoll. It was a very beautiful day of early summer. The air was so clear and fresh that the heat of the sun was not overpowering, and everything seemed full of joy and happiness. Squib did not know which looked the most beautiful—the great white mountains towering into the clear blue sky, or the dark-green pines with their ruddy stems, or the green slopes where the goats browsed and frisked, or the glimpses of tossing, foaming water dashing along below them in

its rocky bed. Everything was so beautiful, he thought; and it seemed more beautiful than ever to-day because Herr Adler was there to see it too, and he pointed out such a number of things that Squib had never noticed before, and told such wonderful stories about the things that grew in the fields and the creatures that lived in the woods, even about the rocks and the stones, the ice and the snow, till Squib, drawing a long breath, would exclaim,—

“O sir, how wonderful everything is! I wish I knew as much as you. It makes everything so interesting.”

“ You can know a very great deal more than I ever shall do, my little friend, and yet feel only how very, very little you have learned. But you are quite right. Everything in the world is full of interest—wonderful interest. Everything can teach us new lessons. Everything speaks to us a beautiful language, if we will only listen and be willing to learn. But learning is often a slow and tedious process; and sometimes we throw down our books with disgust, and say, ‘Oh, I can’t be bothered with all this stupid stuff!’ and we turn to something else to see if that will be more interesting. But that isn’t the spirit in which to learn.”

Squib’s face had turned suddenly red.

“ O sir,” he said, “ how did you know ? ”

At that question Herr Adler smiled; and Squib went on speaking quickly, but with an honest wish to be truthful,—

"I do so often feel like that! I want to know lots of things; but it does seem so slow and tiresome learning. Then I get tired and cross and naughty; and sometimes I just bang down my books and run away out of doors. I shan't be able to do that when I go to school; but at home I can sometimes, because some of my lessons I do quite alone, and there isn't always anybody in the room even."

"I know that feeling very well," answered Herr Adler. "I used to have it too; and I should know a good deal more than I do now if I hadn't given way to it so often. But you take my advice, my little friend; and next time things seem very dull, try to find out if they can't be interesting somehow. If it's history, try to think that all these people were real men and women once; try to put yourself in their places, and think how you would have acted if you had been there. If it's geography, just shut your eyes and try to picture the places you have to learn about. Now that you are a bit of a traveller, you should be able to do that. Think of the sort of people who live there, and the animals, and the great mountains and wonderful forests, or rivers, or deserts—or whatever it is. Even if it's only a hard sum, it can be interesting enough if you will only make up your mind to do your very best with it. And as for Latin and Greek, you must think of all the wonderful old books you will be able to read when you have mastered them. Oh yes, everything

can be interesting, and is interesting really. It is our own fault if we cannot find out where the interest lies."

"I will try that when I get home!" cried Squib, who was always pleased with a new idea; "and I shall try to remember you, sir, and all the things you have told us. I shall say to myself, 'What would Herr Adler say if he saw you so idle?' I think that will help."

"You can think of something better than that, my little friend," was Herr Adler's answer; and Squib looked quickly up into his eyes and did not ask his meaning, for he seemed to see it written there, and his face grew suddenly red.

"I'll try," he answered, in a tone that was almost a whisper; and Herr Adler did not ask him what he meant, yet Squib felt sure he understood.

Seppi heard this talk a little wistfully. Somehow it seemed to him as if his friends lived in such a different world from his own. For a moment he felt isolated from them, almost ashamed of his humble poverty and lowliness; and when at luncheon-time the food was brought out, he grew shamefaced over the coarse fare which he produced from his wallet. It did not seem fit to offer to his companions, and he began to make an apology for it, as he had long ceased to do with Squib now.

Then Herr Adler helped himself to a piece of hard bread and cheese, instead of taking any of Lisa's cakes, saying smilingly,—

"This reminds me of my boyhood, when I and my brothers used to wander about Silesia on foot, and make our money go as far as it would by living with the peasants and eating their food. No; I like this, thank you, my little friend. It revives so many pleasant memories."

"But it isn't fit for you," objected Seppi. "It is such poor fare. It is only fit for—"

"Now, if you don't take care I shall serve you the same as an old friend of mine served his wife," said Herr Adler, with a smile, "and tell you the same story as he told to us."

The faces of both boys brightened instantly.

"Oh, please, tell us the story!" cried Squib. "I do so like your stories, and you have so many of them."

"Well," answered Herr Adler, "I will tell you this one. It happened that one evening, many years ago now, I was taking an evening walk with some friends of mine; and towards dusk we found ourselves near to the house of an old friend whom we had none of us seen for a long time. Although it was late, we thought we would call in and see him, and he gave us a very warm welcome. We sat round the stove for a time; and then he asked us if we would stay and have supper with him, which we agreed to do. Now, he was not a rich man, and he lived quite simply, as German people often do, you know. But his wife bustled about and laid the table, and gave us

an excellent supper of good milk soup, and plenty of good bread and butter. We were hungry after our walk, and enjoyed it all greatly ; but the hostess was not at all content at having nothing better to offer us, and she kept telling us how sorry she was she had not known beforehand of our visit that she might have had a better supper. We told her we wanted nothing better, but she could not be satisfied ; and at last her husband looked up at her with a smile on his face, and said,—

“ ‘ Now wife, be content ; say no more, else I tell our good friends here a story.’

“ At that she smiled too, and a different look came into her face ; and she answered in another tone,—

“ ‘ Nay, then, I will say no more ; ’ and she did not.

“ But, then, of course, we were all very curious to hear the story, and we pressed our host to tell it us. So when the supper was finished, and we had gathered round the stove again with our pipes, he told us.

“ Once upon a time there was a prince, and he went a-hunting in a great forest near to his castle. Now this prince, like so many of the princes in stories (and, perhaps, in real life too), was a rather self-willed and self-confident young man, reckless in his ways, and bent on doing as he chose. And it came to pass that upon this day he outrode all his followers and nobles in pursuit of the quarry, and presently found himself quite alone in the heart of

the great forest. He blew his horn again and again, but nobody came to his aid ; and he did not know which way to turn, nor even in what direction his castle lay. He was quite lost. He was getting very tired too, and it was growing dusk. Also he was extremely hungry, for he had not tasted food since the mid-day meal in the forest, and now it was long past the hour when he generally partook of a sumptuous repast.

" At last, as he was growing quite desperate—having wandered hither and thither for over an hour, and the light beginning now to fade quite out of the sky—he found a little track in the wood, and following it eagerly in hopes of coming across some hut or habitation, he reached a little clearing in which stood a charcoal-burner's rude hut. But the hut itself was empty, for the charcoal-burner was busy over his meiler a few yards away—so busy that he never so much as observed the approach of the prince."

" What is a meiler ? " asked Squib.

" I do not know whether there is an English word for it," answered Herr Adler. " It is a word that belongs to the charcoal-burner's craft. You know that charcoal is wood burned in such a way as to leave behind it the charcoal fit for use ; and the way in which this is done in the open forests by the charcoal-burners is by making first a heap of wood, and then covering it up with earth. The earth heaped over it keeps the fire in check when the

wood is burning. The charcoal-burner has to watch very carefully, sometimes raking the earth away to let the fire burn more freely, sometimes heaping more on to keep it in check ; and the great heap he makes of wood and earth is called a meiler."

"I understand," answered Squib. "Now, please, go on with the story."

"Well, the prince looked about him, and seeing the old man a little away off, he hailed him, and called out,—

"Can you tell me the way out of the forest ? I want to find the way to the road which leads to the town. You know it, I suppose ?"

"Oh yes, I know it well enough," answered the old man, and began to try to make the prince understand how to go. But he soon interrupted, saying,—

"My good fellow, how do you suppose for a moment that I could find such an intricate path as that in the dark ?"

"Then the charcoal-burner stroked his chin, and replied,—

"Well, I was just thinking that maybe you would only lose yourself worse by trying it."

"Then the prince got rather vexed, and said impatiently,—

"What's the use of that, I should like to know ? You must just come with me, my good fellow, and show me the way yourself."

" But at that the charcoal-burner broke into a gruff laugh.

" 'I go with you, indeed! I leave my meiler to take care of itself whilst I show you the way out of the forest! That's a pretty thing to ask! Why, sir, if I were to leave my meiler for a quarter of an hour as she is now, the whole batch of charcoal would be spoiled. Why, I must watch her half the night through, as a cat does a mouse. Leave my meiler to show you the way out of the wood! No, my fine gentleman, that I can't do; ' and the old man laughed again at the notion.

" For a moment the prince was inclined to be angry, for he was not accustomed to be spoken to in that free and easy way; but he reflected that the man did not know him, and was quite right to do his work well and conscientiously. So he checked the impatient words that rose to his lips, and asked quietly,—

" ' But, my good friend, if you cannot leave your meiler, pray, what am I to do? I have no wish to get hopelessly lost in the forest, and, perhaps, fall a prey to wild beasts.'

" ' Well, sir, then why not stay here for a few hours, till the meiler has cooled down, and I can go with you through the forest? I've a fine, comfortable hut over yonder, and a bed fit for a prince, so soft and warm. You can have it, and welcome, since I must watch by the meiler till dawn. As for your

horse, he will find plenty to eat if you turn him loose. He will shift for himself well enough, never fear.'

"‘Oh, the horse will do well enough; I’m not afraid for him,’ answered the prince. ‘It’s of myself I am thinking. I am really starving; I’ve had nothing to eat for hours. What am I to do for supper? Where can I get something to eat?’

“‘Oh, as for that, I’ll share my supper with you,’ answered the old man readily. ‘You know the saying that tells us, “Where one can dine, two can dine.”’

“‘Well,’ said the prince, who had by this time got off his horse and removed saddle and bridle, so that the animal could feed at will, ‘I must needs accept your hospitality for the night, since there seems nothing else to be done.’

“The charcoal-burner had gone back to his meiler, and was heaping on earth here and there; but presently he came back again, and said cheerfully,—

“‘Come, sir, I will show you the hut—such a beautiful hut. Not a drop of rain can find its way through the roof; and as for the bed, why, you need never wish for a cleaner or softer one. I made it myself from dried moss and fern and pine needles. A prince could not wish a better; and for sleeping, there’s nothing like it. Why, I fall asleep almost as soon as I lie down, whether by day or night. Come and see.’

“The prince followed him into the little dark hut,

where he soon blew up a few sparks of fire, and lighted some dry twigs, which blazed merrily. The prince could see that the hut was clean, though so small and dark, and the charcoal-burner pointed to the bed in the corner.

“‘There, sir, you can make yourself comfortable there; and I’ll get the supper as fast as I can.’

“The prince was so tired that he was glad enough to stretch his limbs even on such a rude couch as that one; but he was too hungry to go to sleep yet.

“‘Make haste with that supper, my good friend,’ he kept saying. ‘I hope you have something good to give me.’

“‘Oh, excellent,’ answered the old man, who was dividing his attention between his meal and his guest, often darting out to the former, but coming quickly back again to his hospitable cares; ‘good bread and plenty of it, and the most excellent cheese. Why, it gives me an appetite even to think of it! It is all so good. Drink, did you say, sir? Why, to be sure. There is water in the brook—such fresh, sparkling water! Why, no prince in his palace could have better. Oh, you shall sup well, sir; never fear. Everything is of the very best.’

“The good man spoke with such hearty conviction that the prince could not but smile. However, he was so hungry that he really found pleasure in eating the coarse fare of the peasant, and was ready to agree

with him that the food was excellent. The spring water was clear and pure, and the cup from which he drank, although only of earthenware, was quite clean, though the prince could not but feel amused to think what his knights and servants would think could they see him sharing the supper and resting on the bed of the old charcoal-burner.

"But the peasant could not linger long; his meiler required his constant presence. He slipped away, and the shadows fell in the hut. The prince stretched himself upon his bed of moss and leaves, and was soon in a sound, dreamless slumber.

"When he awoke the sun was up in the sky, and the charcoal-burner's task was for the present over. The meiler could now be left to cool down unwatched, and the old man was at liberty to guide his guest through the forest towards the town.

"So the horse was caught and saddled, and the prince mounted, whilst the peasant walked beside him and showed him the way through the intricate forest paths.

"'No wonder I lost my way!' cried the prince, 'it is a veritable labyrinth!'

"Prince and charcoal-burner talked together in friendly fashion whilst they journeyed on, and at last the old man paused, and pointed through the trees towards something gleaming white before them.

"'That is the great road, sir; now you cannot lose yourself any more. Turn to the left when you reach

it, and it will take you straight to the town. You will see the castle tower to guide you when you have gone a little way. The prince lives there, as perhaps you know."

"'Have you ever seen the prince?' asked the traveller.

"'No, sir, never. They say he is a fine young gentleman, and often hunts in the forest. I hear the horns sometimes, but I have never seen him.'

"'What do the people say of him? Does he do anything else but hunt in the forest?'

"'Why, that's more than I know, sir, having no concern with the affairs of princes. I have my meiler to mind, and he has his country. If he's a wise prince, he will know better than to spend all his time a-hunting. And now, sir, I will wish you good-day, and go back. I have my day's work to do in the forest.'

"But when the prince would have rewarded the man and paid him for his hospitality, he drew back hurt, and would not accept a penny. He was no inn-keeper, he said. The gentleman was welcome to all he had had, and it was plain that he would have been much pained had the prince insisted on paying him.

"'Well then, my good friend,' said the prince, 'since you will not let me pay you anything, you must come some day and sup with me at my house, since I have supped at yours. That is fair enough; you cannot say nay to that.'

"‘Well, sir,’ answered the peasant, ‘if you will have it so, I will come; but you must tell me where you live, else I shall not know where to go when I get to the town.’

“‘Oh, as for that, I will send a servant for you one of these days,’ answered the prince, ‘and he will show you the way.’

“‘Well, and provided I have not my meiler to watch I will come with him,’ answered the charcoal-burner; and then he turned back into the forest and went back to his hut (little knowing it was the prince he had entertained) whilst the prince rode home to his castle, and turned up safe and sound, to the great relief and satisfaction of his gentlemen.

“A few days later, as the charcoal-burner was sitting at the door of his hut one fine evening, a grand servant rode up and told him he had orders to fetch him to sup at his master’s house. The peasant knew then that his guest had not forgotten his promise, and he made ready to go with the man, brushing up his poor clothes as well as he could, and washing away all the traces of his smutty toil off hands and face. Then he went with the servant, and as they neared the town he saw many men wearing the same livery walking about in the streets; and presently his guide took him through a great gateway into the castle itself; and the charcoal-burner stopped short in affright, and said,—

“‘ But I must not enter here ! Surely this is the prince’s castle !’

“‘ Why, yes,’ answered his guide, ‘ and it is the prince who has sent for you to-day.’

“ The old man was greatly astonished and rather troubled at this ; but he had to go on now, and followed his guide into a room which seemed to him wonderfully large and beautiful, where a splendid banquet was laid out, of which he was bidden freely to partake.

“ When the different dishes—almost more than he could count—were placed upon the table, the servants withdrew and left him to eat his supper in peace alone. It was the most wonderful experience he had ever known. He tasted the dishes one after the other, finding them all so good he could not tell which was best. There were choice wines too, which he sipped as he ate, and before very long he had made the very best meal he had ever eaten in his life, and could really eat no more.

“ Then the door at the end of the room opened, and in came his guest of a few nights back. There was something about his dress and aspect which assured the charcoal-burner that it really was the prince himself, and he rose to his feet and made a respectful salutation, reassured by the smile with which he was greeted.

“‘ Well, my good friend, and have you supped well ?’

“‘Oh, most excellently, your highness,’ he answered respectfully, ‘I have supped like a prince.’

“‘Why, so you do in your own hut, according to your own account!’ answered the prince smiling; and then he went up to the table and looked at the dishes there, and his face grew dark and angry. He began finding all manner of fault with first one thing and then the other. This dish was too much cooked, another too little—nothing was done right. He had something bad to say of every one. And so he went on decrying the good food in a haughty and supercilious way, till he suddenly caught sight of the charcoal-burner’s eyes fixed upon him with a look of terror.

“‘Why, what is the matter, my good friend,’ he asked. ‘You look as if you had seen a ghost!’

“The old man looked nervously over his shoulder, though he tried to regain his self-possession and to smile back. But his face was pallid, and his hands shook nervously. The prince was very curious.

“‘What *is* the matter?’ he asked.

“‘Oh nothing, nothing, your highness. But with your highness’ permission I will wish you good-evening and return home, giving my humble thanks for this most excellent supper.’

“But the prince came and laid a hand upon his shoulder.

“‘Nay, my friend,’ he said kindly, ‘but tell me first what is the matter. When I came in, you were

happy and at ease; but all in a moment your face changed, and you have been trembling ever since. What was it that you saw to frighten you? Tell me that.'

"Then the old man trembled more than ever and said,—

"'Nay, your highness, ask me not that; for if I tell you, you will be angry and will cast me into prison, and I shall be undone.'

"'No, no,' answered the prince quickly, 'I will never do that. I give you my word as a prince. Now fear not, but tell me all. No harm shall come to you, I promise it!'

"'Your highness,' said the old charcoal-burner with his eyes on the floor, "it was like this. As you stood there, looking at all that good food and calling it not fit to eat—food for pigs, and I wot not what beside—I suddenly felt a cold wind pass over me that made me shiver from head to foot; and when I looked up to see what it was, behold I saw a terrible face looking over your highness' shoulder, and it seemed to me that it was the face of the devil himself!'

"When the prince heard that, he was quite silent for many minutes, and stood like one who is thinking deeply. The charcoal-burner stood silent and abashed, not daring to raise his eyes; but presently he felt the prince lay a hand upon his shoulder and say to him in a kind voice,—

“ ‘ My friend, thou hast well spoken, and thou hast well seen. I will not forget that vision. But shall I tell you something that I saw out in the forest, when I sat at your table, and heard you praise your food and call it good and excellent ? Well, perhaps I did not see it as clearly as I should, for mine eyes were holden, but I very well know that it was there —a beautiful angel standing all the while beside thee, and I trow that the name which he bears is called the Angel of Contentment.’ ”

Herr Adler paused, and the boys, who had both been listening with deep attention, simultaneously drew a long breath. Seppi’s face was full of earnest thought, which brought the colour into his cheeks ; and it was Squib who cried out eagerly,—

“ Oh, thank you for telling us the story. Do you think it is true ? ”

“ I think it teaches us a great truth, my dear children,” answered Herr Adler kindly ; and meeting the gaze of two earnest pairs of eyes, he added, “ I am quite sure, for one thing, that, when we speak slightlyingly and disparagingly of the good things God has given us, and either from vanity or discontent despise and make light of them, it is the devil or one of his angels who puts such thoughts into our hearts. But when we receive everything joyfully and thankfully, neither grumbling because our share is small, nor coveting things beyond our reach because

others have them, then the spirit of contentment and happiness takes up its abode in our hearts; and if that is not an angel from God—well, it is at least something very like one!"

The smile on Herr Adler's face was reflected upon that of the two children; and Squib thought with loving admiration how little Seppi had of this world's goods, and yet how contented he was! Surely the Angel of Contentment could not be very far away from him! But he did not say this; it only came into his head. What he said was,—

"I wonder the old man didn't know it was the prince. If he had really lived so near his castle always, wouldn't he have seen him sometimes?"

Then Herr Adler laughed, and answered,—

"It does not quite follow, as I can show you by another tale, which I believe to be quite true. It happened to the King of Prussia, the great-grandfather of the present emperor. He was walking one day in the outer park surrounding the castle where he was then living, and he was wearing his undress uniform, so that there was nothing to distinguish him from quite an ordinary soldier. As he drew near to the gateway he saw a little boy with a donkey, and the little boy called out to him and beckoned him to come. Very much amused, the king approached, and the little boy said, 'Look here, I want you to hold my donkey. I've got a letter which I must leave at the castle, and I may not take my donkey inside the

gate. But if you will take care of him till I get back you shall not be the loser. I'll give you something for your trouble when I get back!' So the king took the donkey by the bridle and held him whilst the little boy ran up to the castle and delivered his letter. Then when the little fellow had come back, he pulled out a little silver halfpenny (such as they had in Germany then) and gave it to the king, saying, 'There, my good friend, that's for your trouble, and thank you!' and then he got on his donkey and rode off. But the king kept the silver halfpenny and took it home with him, and when he reached his wife's room he went in and held it out on the palm of his hand, and said—'See there, wife; there is the first money that thy husband has ever earned by the work of his own hands!'"

Both boys laughed merrily at this story, and forgot the grave thoughts which had gone before. But they did not forget to think of Herr Adler's words many times during the days that flew so happily by. Seppi never blushed nor made excuse for the poor or coarse fare he brought with him, and Squib would eat it as readily and with as good an appetite as Lisa's cakes, thinking of the prince in the wood, and how he found all so good when it was seasoned by a good appetite. He and Seppi would play at the prince and the charcoal-burner, and numbers of other games suggested by Herr Adler's tales; and he came often to see them in their favourite valley, and Squib

declared that he was sure the sun shone brighter and the flowers came out better and faster on the days Herr Adler came.

"He's the most splendid man for stories that ever was!" he cried in great admiration one day; "but I feel that, if I had as many stories in my head as he has, it would just burst!"

CHAPTER VIII.

A WONDERFUL WALK.

"**D**O come to see my home and my mother," pleaded Squib one day; "I should so like it—and I'm sure she would too!"

So Herr Adler smilingly consented, and climbed up over the brow of the hill with Squib, pointing out to him a hundred curious and beautiful things along the path that he had never seen before, or rather, had never noticed. There was nobody at home at the chalet when they got there, as the ladies had gone out for a walk before their noonday lunch or breakfast. But Squib did not mind this, for he wanted to show Herr Adler all his collections, and to ask him a lot of questions about the specimens he had picked up and stored away in his cupboards.

Of course Herr Adler knew just what he wanted, and told all about it so interestingly, that they were a long while in getting through the collection. But Squib kept finding again and again how careless and slovenly his work often was. He wanted to dry some plants as specimens, but he was always in a hurry

over it, and did it so carelessly that the poor plant was quite spoiled ; and even his butterflies and moths were many of them ruined because he did not take enough pains with pinning them down properly. When the little boy saw how patiently and gently Herr Adler fingered the specimens, and how understandingly he treated them, he felt ashamed of his own hasty slovenliness, and heaving a great sigh he said,—

“ Oh, I wish I were clever like you ! It must be nice to do everything so well ! ”

“ No, no, my little friend, that is not it at all,” answered Herr Adler. “ You could do all this just as well as I am doing now with my big, clumsy fingers ; but you must have patience, and you must take pains. Nothing is ever done well in this world without care and time and patience.”

“ Ah, that’s just it ! ” sighed Squib, “ and I’m not patient. I’m always in a hurry to get to something else. I want to do things ; but I can’t do them well.”

“ Not all at once, of course ; but if you always do your very best, it will surprise you how fast you will get on. You often hear the saying that if a thing is worth doing at all, it is worth doing well. Try always to keep that in mind, and you will soon see how fast you learn to work cleverly, both with your hands and with your head.”

“ Well, I’ll try,” answered Squib with a sigh ; “ but it’s very hard not to be in a hurry sometimes.”

Herr Adler came presently to his collection of carved animals for the little sisters and friends at home. Squib displayed them with some pride, and his friend spoke very kindly about them; for until Seppi had taught him a little, Squib had had no idea of carving. But he showed Squib, as Seppi never did, how odd many of his animals were, with impossible horns and tails, wrong heads on wrong bodies, and legs sometimes jointed the wrong way—all sorts of blunders, partly careless, partly the result of lacking skill, but defects which Squib had taken as a matter of course before.

"They are such little things, and only to amuse the children," said the little boy, "you see it doesn't much matter whether they are right or wrong. *They* will never care."

"That may be very true; but that's not the way to look at it," answered Herr Adler smiling. "Are you going to be always content to carve in this anyhow fashion? and if not, how are you going to improve, if you are quite satisfied with a creature which has the head of a horse, and the body of a goat, and the tail of a dog?"

Squib burst out laughing as Herr Adler held up the nondescript animal in question, turning it round and round in his hand as he spoke.

"It is rather a queer one, isn't it? But Seppi never told me they were wrong; and Lisa calls them all *wunderschön*. I never troubled to think whether they were right or wrong; but I will now."

"Do, my little friend, and you will find your work a hundred times more interesting. See how Seppi enjoys drawing his goats, now that he is really trying to make them like life, not just so many four-legged creatures that might be almost anything."

"That's quite true," answered Squib; "it's ever so much more interesting. I'll try that with my carving and other things; but I wish everything didn't take so long in the learning."

And then they went down to luncheon, and Herr Adler was introduced by Squib with great pride to his mother and her friends.

During luncheon he was so quiet that Squib was rather disappointed, afraid his mother would not see what a *very* interesting man he was; but when they all went out upon the little terrace afterwards, and sat there sipping coffee and talking, then Herr Adler was easily drawn into conversation, and soon had all the company listening to his stories, and asking him questions. Squib and Czar sat together on the ground perfectly content, and though the talk was often far above the little boy's head, he liked to listen all the same, and to note the interest all the ladies took in what Herr Adler told them. It was quite a long time before they would let him go, and Squib's mother asked him to come again whenever he could spare the time.

"And mother," cried the little boy, pressing up to her eagerly, "Herr Adler says he will take me to see

a glacier ice-cave if you will let me go. It is a long walk, but not too long for me. Please say I may. I do so want to."

"If Herr Adler is kind enough to be troubled with you, you may certainly go," answered the lady with a smile. "It is very kind indeed of him to be willing to have you."

"Herr Adler *is* very kind," answered Squib, looking up with happy confidence into the smiling eyes, "and he tells me such lots of beautiful things too. You can't think how nice it is going about with him."

The lady and Herr Adler both laughed at that, and then the guest took his departure, having arranged for Squib to meet him at a certain point early on the following morning.

"Isn't he kind, and isn't he clever, mother?" he asked eagerly, running back to her; and his mother put her hand upon his head and answered,—

"Yes, Squib, he is all that—and he is better than that; for he is a *good* man too. It does one good to listen to him. I wish you had brought him here before."

"Oh, I'm so glad you feel that too, mother," cried Squib; "I know just what you mean. Every time Herr Adler has been talking to us, Seppi and I both feel as if we wanted to be better—as if we *must* try harder and harder. I don't know why it is, because he often only just sits and tells us tales and makes us laugh. But that's just how we do feel. I

suppose it's because what Seppi said of him is true—that he is a man of God. I always feel that about him."

"And I am sure it is true," said his mother gently.

It was a beautiful, clear, cloudless morning on the morrow when Squib jumped out of bed and found that it was time to dress. Early as it was, it was quite light, although the sun would not yet for some little time climb up high enough to look over the crest of the great mountain away to the east. Squib dressed himself quickly, and found that Lisa was already astir, making him a hot breakfast to take before he started, though Squib had not expected anything half so nice.

Then, with Czar at his heels, he ran down the slope of the hill to the meeting-place, not forgetting to take with him his luncheon satchel, which Lisa had stuffed extra full, nor his long iron-pointed stick which he knew he should want when they got to the ice.

Squib was the first at the meeting-place, but Herr Adler was not long after him, and with him came Seppi's brother Peter, who was to show them the way; for the path in some places varied year by year, owing to constant falls of rock and *débris*, and the gradual very slow motion of the glacier itself. One place was sometimes a little dangerous, unless a guide was taken; and Peter often earned a little money in the summer by acting as guide to this particular spot. His father always made a careful survey of the place spring by

spring, and then showed it to Peter before he went off to his own guide's work in other places.

It was a wonderfully beautiful morning. The sky was solemn and blue in the west, where a few stars faintly twinkled; but overhead it was of a delicate opal colour, that changed and shimmered as you watched it, while all the east was in a glow of shifting rainbow tints—a great streak of clear, pale green, with rosy lines across it, and beyond, lower down, just touching the mountain side as it seemed, a golden glory radiating upwards, palpitating with living fire, till all in a moment the glorious sun rose, with what seemed a sudden bound, above the dazzling whiteness of the snow, shooting forth great level shafts of light over the spotless snowfields, and along the white dew-spangled meadows, waking up the birds, and changing the solemn, dark pine woods into temples full of shimmering golden rain. Squib looked and looked, holding his breath with a sort of awe, and only just breathing out the delighted exclamation,—

“ Oh ! isn’t it beautiful ? Isn’t it glorious ? ”

Herr Adler’s hand was resting on his shoulder. He felt a kindly answering pressure as the answer came.

“ Glorious and beautiful indeed, my child. But do you ever think, my little friend, of what it will be like when the promise is fulfilled, and when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in His wings ? ”

Squib looked up quickly with a question in his eyes.

"No, sir ; I don't think I ever thought about it."

"Ah no ; you are still young for such thoughts. Never mind, they will come to you whether you will or no, as you go on in life. But believe me, my child, that glorious day *will* come ; and when it does, the world will see such glory and blessedness as it has never known yet. God grant that it be near at hand !"

And Squib said in his heart, "Amen !" though he scarcely knew what thought it was that found an echo there.

Then they began their walk, and a most beautiful walk it was. Having started early, and having the whole day before them, they were in no hurry to get to their destination, but could afford time to look at everything as they went along, and even to turn aside to hunt for some specimen of flower or moss in promising-looking places. Sometimes they sat down and talked, and made Peter tell them some of the legends of the mountains, and what the people used to believe about the ice-maidens and the little Bergmännlein in the hills. Herr Adler knew fairy stories too, and told them better than Peter could ; and Squib listened with both his ears, and only wished he could remember everything, to repeat it to the children at home.

It was such a beautiful walk ! The path led through a great pine wood, and along the side of a roaring stream, which grew narrower and narrower

as they pursued its course. And Peter told Squib that it had its rise in the ice-grotto whither they were bound, so that it was always full of water, however dry the summer, being fed by the great glacier itself.

Again and again the path dipped down, and they had to cross the stream by a little crazy-looking bridge, which seemed hardly strong enough to bear them. Peter told them that in the winter floods these bridges were often swept away, and had to be thrown across afresh in the spring; so it was not wonderful that they were rather rickety affairs, and that Czar felt rather nervous at crossing them, and expressed his displeasure by the very gingerly way in which he stepped over them. Herr Adler and Squib found much fun in watching him; for he would generally turn round again with something between a bay and a growl of displeasure, as much as to say,—

“ You’ve no business to call yourself a bridge—a few miserable poles strapped together and thrown across; not fit for any respectable dog to go over, let alone a man ! ”

It grew hot as the sun rose high in the sky; but in the wood it was pleasant and cool. The smell of the hot pine trunks was delicious; and when they wanted to sit down, the beds of pine needles made a soft and springy seat. Sometimes they came upon little clearings, where a few huts or chalets were clustered together, and brown-legged, bare-headed

children would come out to stare, and to grin at Peter, and exchange greetings with him in their rude patois, which Squib could hardly understand in their mouths, though he could talk to Seppi and Peter well enough.

There were little herds of goats to be seen browsing on the scanty herbage, and now and then a cow with a bell round her neck. Sometimes they heard the sound of the cow-bells up on the heights above, where the cattle had been taken for the summer months ; but more often the valley was very silent : there did not seem to be many birds, and only squirrels darted about and whisked up the trees—sometimes faster than the eye could follow them.

Once Herr Adler made Squib come and sit close beside him, and keep perfectly still—Peter having gone on ahead to make sure of the right path—and presently a squirrel whisked down from a neighbouring tree and sat up on its hind-legs gazing fixedly at them. And then, as they did not move, it came nearer and nearer, and presently it was trying to investigate the contents of Squib's satchel, which he had taken off his shoulders and laid beside him. There was a bit of paper sticking out at the top, and the squirrel got hold of it and nibbled at it ; and then he gave it a pull, and dislodged a biscuit—to his great satisfaction—and he got a fragment of it nibbled off, and sat up with it in his two hands, eating it with such relish that Squib could not help himself,

but burst out into a laugh ; when, whisk ! the little creature was gone in a moment—where, they could not see.

Then Herr Adler told him that almost all wild things would come quite close to human beings if only they remained perfectly still. It was movement that frightened them ; but curiosity would draw them to come to anything which looked unusual ; and so long as perfect stillness was maintained, they appeared quite fearless.

“If you had kept quite still, the squirrel might in time have come and sat on your knee,” said Herr Adler ; but Squib was not good at sitting still very long, and when Peter came back he was quite ready to go on again.

They were getting near to the glacier now, and left the wood behind them. There was some rather rough walking to do, and the sun beat down and made them very hot ; but it was so interesting to see how strangely the rocks were jumbled up together, and to hear Herr Adler explain how the glacier moved and ground down through the rocks with irresistible force, that he did not mind the heat a bit : it was only Czar that disliked the rough walking amongst the great boulders.

Peter went on a little in front and called out to them how to go, and sometimes came back to help them to cross a little crevasse which lay right in their path. Sometimes when Squib looked down these little

crevasses he could see water running below, and sometimes a cold green gleam told him that there was ice deep down beneath his feet. Sometimes their way led them just beneath towering walls of rock, and here Peter hurried them along rather fast, for it was in these places that there were frequent falls of rock and *débris*, which, if travellers chanced to be passing at the time, might very easily crush them to death. In the spring-time when the snow was melting fast, and little avalanches kept rolling down the sides of the mountains, these places were too dangerous for travellers to attempt them; but now they were tolerably safe, although it was always thought well to walk fast, and to keep eyes and ears well open in case of any fall of stones.

However, no mischance befell the party. They got over the dangerous place quite happily; and then Squib drew his breath in wonder and amaze, for he saw before him, though at some little distance, the opening to the beautiful ice-grotto right in the heart of the glacier.

He had never seen a glacier quite so near before, at least not such a beautiful gleaming white one. Those he had seen with his father had been rather disappointing, they looked so much dirtier than he thought they would, and were so difficult to get at. But this one was beautiful, clean, and pure, with gleaming greeny-blue chasms in it, and crisp white ridges shining and glistening in the sun. There was

a beautiful cascade, too, leaping down its edge, and, where the sun touched it, it made a sort of rainbow about the water. As he stood watching it, Herr Adler told him more about rainbows than he had ever known before—how they come, and what they are. It was so beautiful on that little platform of rock, with the glacier all about them, and with the sunshine lying bright upon the warm stones, that they sat down there and ate their lunch before going into the cave; and Squib tied the handle of his little drinking-cup to a piece of string and let it down into the waterfall to fill, and declared there never was such delicious water.

"It feels like drinking rainbows!" he said with a sigh of contentment, as he emptied his cup.

The ice-grotto was a wonderful place. Close to the mouth of it stood a queer little hut, out of which hobbled a bent old man, ready to show travellers the way. He looked at the party, and then his wrinkled face kindled into a broad smile, for he had been there when Herr Adler used to visit the place often, and he knew and remembered him quite well, and was full of joy at seeing him again.

Squib liked to hear the kind way in which Herr Adler spoke to him, although he did not understand all they said, the old man's talk being very queer indeed. But as he stood watching he turned many things over in his mind, and he said to himself,—

"When I'm a man I should like people to love



"Down, down, down--with a crash, and a bang, and a roar!"

me, and remember me, and be glad to see me, just as everybody is so glad to see Herr Adler. I can't ever be so good, or so kind, or so nice as he is ; but I can try to be as kind as I can. I think it's because Herr Adler is always *interested* in everything and everybody. At least I'm sure that's one thing. I get bored when people talk about things that I've not thought about, or that don't seem to belong to me ; but Herr Adler's never bored—he's always interested. I don't think he ever pretends—he *does* care. He does like to hear everything ; and he cares for every single person he meets, whether he ever saw them before or not. If he were me, I believe he'd be nice to the girls about their tiresome dolls, and never tease them by calling them sillies. I should like to be nice and kind to everybody, so that everybody might love me. Of course I don't suppose I can ; but at any rate I can try ! ”

After the old man had talked a little while with Herr Adler he hobbled back into his hut, and came out again with some little packets in his hand ; and at sight of them Peter's face brightened, and he whispered to Squib in pleased tones,—

“ He's going to illuminate the cave with different-coloured fires. He is very clever at that, but he won't do it for everybody. I'm so glad. It looks lovely when it's all lighted up ! ”

Then they followed the little old man along a rather dim passage, the air of which struck very

chill, and then down some slippery steps, where they had all to tread very carefully, because there was ice under the sand sprinkled over them. After that they went along another gallery, and then came out into a wonderful grotto, the walls of which were of ice, with here and there a ledge of jutting rock, and where great icicles hung down from the roof in all sorts of queer fantastic shapes, and great blocks of ice on the floor seemed to take the shape of monster beasts lying crouched in corners, or guarding the entrance to the branching passages.

Squib wondered at first if it was his fancy that the ice looked to him like great beasts, but Peter told him afterwards that the old man often amused himself by chipping at the ice-blocks, and giving to them a grotesque shape. Of course they were always gradually changing in shape, but the carving was too rude for that to matter much. A blow here and there would soon give it a vague shape again, and the old custodian amused himself by the astonished remarks of the travellers. Many went away with the firm impression that they had seen frozen or "fossilized" antediluvian animals; and when Herr Adler heard this, a twinkle came into his eyes, and he turned to Squib and said,—

"Well, it is not long since an old friend of mine, who has a post in the British Museum in London, told me of a remark made to him by a lady of position and education, though, poor lady, she could

not have used her brains to much advantage. They had been getting in some new fragments of statuary and so forth—from Greece, I think it was—and these great fragments were lying about in some confusion, waiting to be set in place. Many persons came to see them, and amongst them this lady; and my friend found her standing looking at the broken fragment of a horse. There was the head and neck and a small part of the body, and nothing more. It was leaning up against the wall, and as my friend passed by, the lady smiled at him and greeted him (for she knew him a little), and said, ‘I have come to see your new collection. I am so interested. Now this, I suppose, is a part of a fossil horse?’ And without waiting for an answer she rattled on about something else; and went away no doubt quite happy in the idea that she had seen a remarkable fossil.”

The ice-grotto was certainly very wonderful and beautiful, and when the old man lighted it up with coloured fire, its beauty quite took Squib’s breath away. The red or the blue light flickered over the transparent walls and amongst the great hanging icicles, transforming the grotto into a fairy palace, such as the child had dimly pictured sometimes in his day-dreams. He did not wonder now that the inhabitants of these wild mountain places, so full of wonderful and beautiful hidden places, should have stores upon stores of legends about the unseen beings who lived there. Squib could almost fancy he saw the shadowy

outlines of the ice-maidens hiding in the recesses of the grotto. It was not difficult to believe that, if anybody fell asleep in such a place, he would awake to find the world all changed about him.

Squib, however, had no chance of making this experience for himself. After a short time their guide took them back into the open daylight again, and Herr Adler, looking at his watch, said that they must be going.

"*It was a lovely place!*" said Squib, as they began retracing their steps; "I think it was quite the nicest place I've seen. What lots of things I shall have to tell the children when I get back! I shall never remember half. I wonder if Czar will tell the dogs about it too? Do you think animals do talk to one another?"

"They certainly make one another understand things sometimes. I'll tell you about a dog belonging to my grandfather. He had two dogs—one a small terrier, and the other a great Newfoundland; and these two dogs were great friends. Once my grandfather had occasion to take a journey. It was before there were any railways, and he had to travel in his own carriage. He took his little terrier with him, and the big dog stayed at home. On the second day of his journey he arrived at the house of a friend, where he was to spend the night. And at this house was a dog which resented the arrival of the terrier, and gave him a good mauling before anybody could go to his

assistance. Well, my grandfather did not think much of it. He went away on the next day, taking the little dog with him ; but when he stopped to bait the horses at mid-day, the dog disappeared, and he quite failed to find him, and had to go on without him. He was away from home about a fortnight ; and whilst engaged upon his business he had a letter from his wife, saying that the Newfoundland dog had suddenly disappeared, and had not been seen for a whole day. That was the only letter he got from his wife all the time he was absent, because he was moving about, and she could not be sure where he would be. As he was going home, he again passed a night at the house of his friend ; and there he heard that upon the morning but one after he had left, his little terrier dog had suddenly appeared there, with a great Newfoundland as his companion ; that the Newfoundland had set upon the dog of the house and had given him a thorough good thrashing —if you can use such an expression with regard to dogs—after which the two companions had gone quietly away together. And sure enough, when my grandfather got home, there were the two dogs, quite happy and content ; and his wife told him that, the very day after she had written her letter, the Newfoundland had come home, bringing with him (to her great bewilderment) his little friend the terrier, and there they had been ever since."

"Oh!" cried Squib, delighted. "Then the little dog

had run home and told the big one all about it, and got him to come and fight the gentleman's dog for him, and then they had gone home together ! Was that it ? ”

“ It seems as if it must have been. That is the story just as my grandfather told it, and it is quite true. So dogs certainly have the power of making each other understand up to a certain point, though how far this goes I suppose nobody will ever really know.”

By this time they had reached the rough and rocky piece of ground, and had to pick their way carefully without being able to talk much. Peter was on ahead, and suddenly they heard him shouting to them in a voice which seemed full of fear ; and when they looked they saw him gesticulating wildly, and pointing up into the mountain's side above them, where Squib saw an odd-looking little cloud of dust coming tumbling down.

“ What is it ? ” he asked curiously, pausing to stare ; but when he glanced into Herr Adler's face he saw that it was very grave, although there was no fear in the steady blue eyes.

“ It is a little avalanche, my boy,” said Herr Adler quickly. “ Run on to Peter as fast as you can. You see that great wall of rock under which the path lies, run on there quickly, and stand up under its shelter. I will follow you as fast as I can ; but run you on, and take Peter with you. That is what he is motioning us to do.”

"May I not stay with you?" asked Squib. "I should like to keep together."

"I would rather you ran on first, my child. I shall not be far behind."

Something in the look and tone made Squib obey, although he would rather have kept at Herr Adler's side. As soon as he got up to Peter, the elder boy grasped him by the hand and hurried him along at a great pace, and all the while he kept gasping out excited, disjointed fragments of talk, by which Squib made out that they were just in the very track of the dangerous falls of stone which were dislodged by the little avalanches up in the mountain slopes, and that their only chance of safety was to shelter themselves under the protecting wall of rock. Even there they might chance to meet with injury, but in the open they could hardly hope to escape.

Squib and Peter quickly reached the shelter, and turned round in an agony of apprehension and anxiety to see where Herr Adler was. He was not far behind, and was making his way rapidly towards them. Squib was glad to note that Czar remained beside him, as though with some instinct of protection, although, poor fellow, it was little aid he could give if the avalanche came upon them.

"Oh, come quick—come quick!" cried Squib, darting forward to pull his friend in under the friendly shelter of the great rocky wall; and when they were all there together, Herr Adler found a place where

a deep crevice in the wall of rock enabled both the children to stand in almost perfect safety, whilst he remained close to them ; and they all held their breath to listen to the strange rushing and grinding sounds above them, which grew louder and fiercer every moment.

"O sir, do come inside, and let me stand where you are !" pleaded Squib earnestly ; but Herr Adler smiled, and put his hand gently on the child's head.

"I would rather we stayed as we are, my child," he said. "Your mother trusted you to me, and I must restore you to her safe and sound ; but I think we shall all of us be preserved from injury."

Something in the quiet tones of the voice stilled the tumult of Squib's spirit, though it was rather terrible to hear the gathering avalanche rattling and bounding overhead, and to know that it was tearing down upon them like a live monster rushing after its prey. Suppose it were to fall upon them, even in this place, or break away the protecting rocks and bury them all amongst them ! Squib felt a shiver run through him at the thought, and involuntarily he looked up at Herr Adler ; and something he saw in that tranquil face put new ideas into his head, and suddenly some words came into his mind which took away all his fear.

"For He shall give His angels charge over thee."

Yes, it said so in the Bible. Squib knew that, though he could not have found the place ; and in his heart he said,—

"I am sure the angels will take care of Herr Adler. I won't be afraid any more."

Down, down, down—with a crash, and a bang, and a roar! How the mountain seemed to be shaking and quaking. It was like thunder roaring just over their heads. The air was full of choking dust; there was an awful crash just beyond them, and for a moment Squib had to fight for breath. He felt as though he were swallowing whole mouthfuls of gravel and earth. It was so dark all round them that he could not see anything. Then the sounds grew more distant; the air began to clear; and he heard Herr Adler's voice saying softly,—

"Thank God, my children! we have been wonderfully preserved."

Peter and Squib crept out of their hiding-place and looked about them. Everything was changed in the few minutes, and the path of the avalanche was marked by a wide track of freshly-fallen rock and ice and *débris*. Peter pointed eagerly to the still-rolling mass of snow and rock, dashing down to the very bottom of the valley; but Squib looked up at Herr Adler, and asked,—

"Are you sure you are not hurt?"

"Quite sure, my little friend. The wall of rock quite protected us; and not even a fragment of rock fell upon us. It was all shot several yards beyond our feet; but I am a terrible object to look at, I suspect. When we get to the woods, I must gather a

bunch of heather or creeping-rose and give myself a brush down. Tell me, my child, were you afraid ? ”

“ Rather,” answered Squib truthfully, as he took Herr Adler’s hand and walked onwards with him—Peter, as usual, keeping some thirty yards ahead ; “ I was frightened till I thought of that verse about the angels keeping watch—or having charge ; and after that I didn’t mind so much. Herr Adler, do you think that angels *do* watch over us ? ”

“ I think we have good reason for believing so, my little friend. We know that they watched over our Lord when He was on earth ; and I do not think that He had any helps or comforts here which are denied to His children. And in the book of Daniel the angels are spoken of as being ‘ holy watchers ’—the watchers, the holy ones, it says. I thought of that the other day when you spoke of the Silent Watchers. The holy angel-watchers are even better, are they not ? ”

Squib’s eager, liquid eyes gave response ; and Herr Adler continued,—

“ Nobody who believes in the Lord doubts that He watches over His children at all times ; and we know that the angels are His messengers and ministering spirits ; so it is not difficult to believe that they may be sent by Him to watch over us, especially in times of danger. And I think we have too many facts which cannot be disputed to warrant us in doubting this, if we think about it seriously.”

"Do you mean you know any stories about it? Please tell me."

"I know a great many—far too many to tell; but I will tell you one which is quite true, and which I can only understand in one way. There was once a pious merchant of South Germany who had occasion to make a journey into Switzerland. It was in the early part of the century, when travelling was not always safe, and he had to pass through some very wild and lonely country. He drove in his own little cart, and went from place to place as his business required. At one halting-place, when he spoke to the innkeeper and the persons in the inn about the next village he had to go to, they shook their heads, and advised him not to do so. The place was very wild; the inn he proposed going to bore a very ill name; several travellers going there had disappeared, and had never been heard of since. It was thought very foolhardy of him to attempt such a thing. Nevertheless the merchant desired to go there, having certain things to do which made it advisable. There was one traveller in the room who had not spoken all this while; but presently, being left alone with him, the merchant asked him if he knew whether what had been said was true, and if this place was not safe. He answered, 'It is not safe; you will run into danger; but trust in God, and you shall be protected.'

"Now the merchant, being a pious man, was quite ready to take this advice, though the serious manner in

which it was spoken surprised him. But the traveller went out, saying nothing more ; and the next morning the merchant started on his journey without seeing him again. The roads he had to traverse were very lonely and bad, and it took him much longer to get to his journey's end than he had expected. Indeed, it was growing dusk before he saw any signs of the place, though he had particularly wanted to get there before dark. At last he came to the unwelcome conclusion that he was quite lost, and this was rather a serious matter in so wild and lonely a country. But whilst he was wondering what he should do, and whether he should turn, he suddenly saw the traveller of the previous evening riding towards him on a white horse. He hailed him with great satisfaction, and the traveller not only put him into the right road, but rode with him to the place, and to the inn, which, at that time of night, was the only house open in all the town. It looked very suspicious and ill-omened, and the looks of the people were as bad as they could be ; but the two travellers got supper and bed, and their two rooms opened the one into the other, which was reassuring.

“ ‘ You take the inner one,’ said the traveller to the merchant, and so they arranged things ; and although the merchant had an uneasy impression of creeping steps and hushed voices about the house that night, nothing happened ; and he went on his way next day safe and sound. But again he had some very bad roads to traverse, and again at nightfall he

found himself quite lost. He was in the heart of a great forest this time, and the tracks were so confused and intricate that he was perfectly helpless ; and again he could only pray that God would send him help. Suddenly his horse stopped dead short, with a snort of terror. The merchant tried to urge him on, but he would not go ; and almost at the same time he again saw his fellow-traveller on the white horse riding towards him. ‘Take care !’ he said. ‘Do not urge on your horse ; you are close to the edge of a deep gravel-pit. If your horse had not seen the danger, you would have been dashed in pieces. But turn round and come with me. I will put you into the right road.’ So he brought him through the forest and set him on the high-road, and showed him the lights of a neighbouring town, and was about to bid him farewell when the merchant detained him to say, ‘Sir, I am greatly beholden to you. I owe you my very life, and that twice over, I think. Will you not tell me who you are, and whence you come ?’ Then the traveller answered, ‘I am the messenger from the Shining Mountain ; and I am doing my appointed duty,’ and with that he waved a farewell and rode away.

“Now, you know that the German name Leuchtenberg—or ‘shining mountain’—is a very common one in many parts of the country, and almost any conspicuous building on a hill is called the Leuchtenberg. Indeed, when the merchant awoke next

morning, he saw a white-walled castle on a hill not far away, which the people called the Leuchtenberg ; and before setting out for home, he went up thither, and asked about the messenger on the white horse who was sent to warn travellers of their danger. But nobody there knew anything about it. There was no such man and no such horse as he described : no messenger was sent out for any such purpose. And the merchant went away in some perplexity and awe ; and he ever afterwards believed that the traveller was a messenger from God sent to protect him in the time of his greatest peril. But he never knew more than what I have told you.”

Squib, who had listened with his habitual eager earnestness, now drew a long breath, and said,—

“ It is a beautiful story. I must remember it to tell the children at home. I think I can understand it better to-day. I think, perhaps, it’s the mountains, and the ice, and all the beautiful things I see every day ; but it does seem as if there might be angels to take care of us. I shall try never to be afraid now if things are dreadful. I know *you* weren’t afraid just now, though Peter and I were. I call this a very wonderful walk. I like it better than any walk I’ve ever taken before.”

CHAPTER IX.

A STORY AND A FAREWELL.

“GOING away! O Herr Adler—don’t go away!
We can’t spare you.”

So said Squib in vehement dismay, catching hold of one of Herr Adler’s hands as he spoke, as though he would restrain him by force.

“Why must you go?” continued the child eagerly. “You are grown up: you can do just as you like. Ah, do stay as long as I do!”

“So that is your idea of being grown up—to do just as one likes,” said Herr Adler, with his amused smile, which always made Squib feel as if he were thinking of all manner of things unknown to the world at large. “Well, perhaps you are not so far out, my little friend; for I do not only like my work, I love it with all my heart. A holiday sometimes is very pleasant and restful; but, after all, it is the work that is the best part of life.”

“Oh!” cried Squib, “it isn’t so for us—for children, I mean. It’s all beautiful out here amongst the mountains; but I can’t bear to think of going back, and

just having stupid, tiresome lessons to do. It will be so dull!"

"Dull!" said Herr Adler, in a voice which brought a sudden wave of red into Squib's cheeks; "dull to learn all sorts of wonderful and interesting things about the great wonderful world we live in! Why, what did you say to me the other day about finding everything so interesting? And now you call your lessons dull. Why, that is nonsense!"

"Oh, if *you* taught me my lessons they would all be interesting," answered the little boy quickly; "but some people can't make anything interesting; and then—and then—"

Herr Adler nodded his head several times, with one of his grave smiles.

"Yes, you may well say, 'and then—and then—' and stick fast. Can't you make things interesting for yourself? How is it your games are all so interesting?—your collections and your carving? Why, because you are interested; because you want to learn and to know and to do more and more, and better and better. And your lessons will be just as interesting—no matter who teaches you—if you just make up your mind that you *want to know*. Not long ago I met in company one of the cleverest men living. It was in a very mixed gathering, and there were all sorts of very different people there. I watched this gentleman a long time. He went from one to another, and again and again I heard him say, 'I want to know' this—

'I want to know' that. No matter to whom he talked, he had always something to ask. He always wanted to know. You take him as an example, my little friend. You want to know—and you will find nothing dull."

Squib looked bright and eager, yet he sighed a little nevertheless.

"If I only had you living near, and could see you sometimes, I think I could feel like that. But I'm afraid the feeling will go off by-and-by, when I get home. I feel as if it would be different when I live in another place. If I lived always in this valley, full of such interesting things—like Seppi—I should be so happy! I should love to see the snow come down, and live in one of those queer little chalets, and look after the goats, and carve things all day; and wait for the spring to come again. But one's own work seems so tame and stupid. I wish we could sometimes change with other people!"

Seppi's eyes opened wide as he heard the little Herr speak so. He did not *say* anything, but his face plainly told that he thought exactly the opposite—that it was his own life which was dull, and the little English boy's full of pleasure and variety. Herr Adler, looking from the one face to the other, and putting down his hand into the depths of his great pocket, said with a smile,—

"Why, I think I shall have to read you a story which a young friend of mine wrote, and sent to me

the other day, asking my opinion of it. I read it out of doors last evening, and have it in my pocket still. It is funny we should begin talking about our work, for that is what the story is about."

Squib's face lighted at mention of a story, as did Seppi's also.

"Oh, please read it to us," he said eagerly. "Has it got a name?"

"It has a motto, which perhaps will do as well; I wonder if you are Latin scholar enough to translate it. My young friend has called it—'Via Crucis, Via Lucis.' Can you construe that?"

"It is something about a cross and light," said Squib, after considering.

"Yes; it means—'The Way of the Cross is the Way of Light.' Now, I will read you the story; and then perhaps you will understand better."

And so Herr Adler read:—

I.

Many long years ago a child dwelt in a quaint old city, and laboured diligently to earn his daily bread. He was fatherless and motherless, and nobody paid much heed to the lonely boy.

Now, hard by that city, just without the walls, stood a great monastery, wherein lived men called monks, who dwelt apart from other men, and thought best to serve God by renouncing those things which men hold dear, and giving themselves to fasting and prayer.

For many hundreds of years men believed that God could best be served so ; and some of the monks led very pious and godly lives. The rich and great of the earth called them holy men, and often gave to them great gifts in money or land, to be spent to the glory and honour of God. And when the monks were faithful to their vows, this money entrusted to them was spent either in relieving the necessities of the poor, or in the erection of churches or other buildings to be used for the honour and glory of God.

At the time of which I speak—long, long ago—when the child dwelt in this city, a stately church was being built hard by the monastery walls, and it fell to the lot of the boy to labour with the masons, and to hand them the heavy hodfuls of mortar as they stood upon the scaffolding at their toil.

Day after day they toiled at their work, and the child with them ; and, behold, the days grew very long to him, and waxed more and more wearisome. The hodfuls of mortar seemed to become heavier day by day ; and when he saw other children passing by, laughing and singing in their play, his heart cried out against the hardness and dreariness of his own life. Instead of looking upwards, and taking pleasure in the progress of the stately building, and his own humble share in the pious work, he was looking ever earthwards, and his heart grew heavy within him.

Now it came to pass that the monks from the monastery hard by came oftentimes to the place where

the workmen laboured, and watched the walls of the church rising ever higher and more high, and sometimes worked with their own hands upon some of the beautiful carving in stone or wood with which it was to be adorned ; for to these pious men there was no drudgery in work that was done for the honour and glory of God ; and they looked forward with longing for the day when the voice of prayer and praise should ascend from these walls, and when men should learn ever more and more of the nearness of His abiding presence in His church.

One of the monks who oftenest came to watch or to work was called Father Gottlieb—and his very name seemed to show something of the nature of the man, for Gottlieb means “ the love of God ;” and those who looked upon the gentle face, which bore traces of fastings and prayers and vigils, could see that love shone forth from his deep-set eyes, and could hear it in the tones of his beautiful voice.

For Father Gottlieb had a voice that sometimes sounded like a trumpet call ; and since he had been dedicated to the service of the Lord from his youth, and had been long resident within the walls of the monastery, the men of the city had come to love and revere him, and even the rough workmen hushed their loud voices, and were ashamed of their idle jests, when they saw the tall form of the monk approaching.

Sometimes as he stood and watched the work, a

look of rapture would steal into his eyes, and he would utter words which had a beautiful sound, albeit not all of those who stood by knew what was meant by them.

It chanced one day, as Father Gottlieb was looking on at the builders' toil, that he stood close beside the child of whom I have spoken, and looking up to heaven he cried,—

“Blessed are those who are counted worthy to serve Him! Yea, thrice blessed, for their reward shall be great!”

Then the child, looking up into the face of the monk, took courage to ask a question.

“Of whom dost thou speak, holy father? Who are these blessed ones?”

And the monk laid a hand upon his head as he answered,—

“All are blessed—thou and all thy fellow-labourers; for ye serve a gracious and kindly Master, who will bless all your toil for Him.”

But the child answered and said,—

“Nay, but mine is a hard taskmaster. Day by day do I do my part, and toil in the heat of the sun. Yet oftentimes he gives me harsh words, and never a blessing. I am weary to death of such service.”

But the monk looked down at the child with a searching gaze and made answer,—

“Ah, my child, thou hast not yet learned whom thou dost serve. He is no harsh Taskmaster. He

is gracious and loving, and full of compassion and tender mercy. And blessed are those who are permitted to toil for Him, and raise up temples to His honour and glory!"

But the child understood him not. He thought only of his earthly taskmaster, and in the face upturned to the monk was nothing but thankless discontent and wonder. Father Gottlieb was gazing upward, where high up in the dazzling blue air the builders were toiling at the soaring spire of the church, and raising his hand and pointing heavenwards, he asked,—

"What dost thou see there, my child?"

Then the child looked, and made answer,—

"I see the builders busy at their work."

But the monk answered and said,—

"I see the smiling of the Master's face."

Then the bells began to sound forth the Angelus, and the monk went back to the monastery, for he had his appointed work to do, and might not linger longer. And the child took up his task again.

Night by night as the child lay upon his rude bed he thought of the father's words, but he comprehended them not, for his heart was full of bitterness because of the hardness of his own lot, and the thankless toil which he had grown to hate.

"The master is not kind," he cried aloud. "He is a hard taskmaster. He chides me oft. I never see a smile upon his face. I will no more of his

service. To-morrow I will go forth into the wide world, and find fresh paths to walk in. I will no longer serve. I will be mine own master."

For the child thought only of an earthly master, and knew not that he was set in the world to serve the Master in the heavens as well.

So when the day dawned he arose from his bed, while all the world yet slumbered, and wandered away from his home.

II.

Ah, how sweet it was to stand in the early sunshine, free as the sunbeams themselves! drinking in the pure morning air, listening to the glad warbling of the happy birds as they flew hither and thither in the green woodland!

Sweet, indeed, were the voices of nature, and yet the child's soul was not attuned to their harmonies. For each and every one of them sang of the appointed work given to him to do in the wonderful and mysterious realm of Nature; and the child had made a vow that he would toil no more, that he would be no servant; so the voices of Nature, which it was given him to understand, fell oftentimes upon unwilling ears.

Yet, though he could understand the voices around him, he was not surprised. It seemed as if the dewy morning had woven some spell about him, and as if he were in some sort changed, albeit in very truth that same child who had fled from the city,

and from his appointed place, that he might be free from service. Nor did his heart misgive him one whit for the thing that he had done.

Climbing up a mountain he presently came upon a brook, rippling down over the rocky boulders. Weary and footsore he sat down beside the clear water, dipping his hot feet into a cool, deep pool, and listening the while to the song of the laughing stream as it leaped or glided down the side of the mountain. It sang of the rocky cavern whence it came, fed by some unseen springs in the depths of the hills, of the avalanches which fell with the melting of the snow from the heights above, of the green meadows in the valley below, towards which it was hastening, and even of great cities through which it must pass, and where it must do an appointed work, before it reached the great and boundless ocean towards which it, like all water, was for ever trending.

But when the child heard this song, and saw how the water foamed and dashed amongst the rocky boulders, instead of choosing the softer spots for its channel, he cried aloud, and said,—

“ Brooklet, wherefore dost thou choose such a toilsome way for thyself? See yonder, where the flowers bloom and the moss makes a soft carpet! Turn aside from those cruel rocks, and linger where all is fresh and fair and sweet; and haste not to the haunts of men, where there are toil and trouble! Why wilt thou not rest and play here in this pleasant place?”

But the brooklet answered and said,—

“Thou talkest foolishly, O mortal child! Not mine the choice. I have my appointed course and work set for me. I do but follow where the Master points the way. Amid rocks and melting snows I gather strength and volume for my journey; but I may not linger to disport myself in green valleys. I have a work to do for the Master, and He it is who bids me ever forward and onward. I am here to do His holy will.”

But the child waxed angry, and said,—

“Hadst thou laboured as I have in the heart of the city, thou wouldest not talk thus. Thou wouldest turn aside and do thine own pleasure. For sweet is freedom!”

“Nay,” murmured the brooklet, “sweet is service for Him. And blessed are they who serve the Master in His appointed way.”

Presently the child, being footsore and hungry, sought a place of shelter for the night, and finding himself in his wanderings at the door of a farmhouse, he craved food at the hands of the good folk there and a night’s lodging. These, taking pity on his loneliness, gave him bread to eat and milk to drink, and allowed him to make his bed amidst the fragrant hay in a loft above the cowshed.

That night, waking from the sleep of exhausted nature, he thought he heard the sound of voices beneath, and looking through a wide crack in the

floor, saw that the cattle below were conversing with one another, nor did it surprise him, after all that had occurred to him that day, to find that he understood what they said to each other.

“Oh, how my bones do ache!” grumbled a young bullock, who had been working at the plough (as is the fashion in the country in which the child lived), “I have been yoked to the plough all day. And now I shall have but a few short hours’ rest before they take me forth again.”

“And we,” answered a pair of strong white oxen, who were greedily munching their fodder, having been that night brought into their stalls quite late, “we have been worse used than thou, brother; for we were up with the sun, and have been working till he set, dragging I know not how many loads of hay from the meadows to the yard. Truly our case is an evil one! And to-morrow will be like to-day. And after the hay comes the harvest, and nothing but work, work, work from morning till night. Ugh! Ugh!”

“Nay, but is it not a great and blessed thing, my brothers, to share in the beautiful harvesting of the earth?” questioned a gentle-faced brown cow with a white star on her forehead. “Methinks it is a gracious and goodly task to prepare the brown fields for the sowing of the seed, and, again, to help in the joyful ingathering. For the hearts of all men are glad with great rejoicing, and they will bless the Master

who has sent the gracious harvest blessing ; and we who have toiled and laboured will assuredly not lose our share in the gladness and the reward."

" Ah ! " said the young bullock impatiently, " it is easy for thee and such as thee to talk ! Thou dost not labour day after day in the heat of the sun, as I am called upon to do ! "

" Nevertheless," answered the meek cow, " I have had many a burden to bear in my time ; and I have had my moments of impatience and murmuring. But I have learned to love my bondage now, and to seek happiness in service ; for all that we do is done for the Master, and it is His desire that each one of His creatures shall serve Him in the appointed place and way. Yea, and blessed is all work done for the Master. May He accept it and bless it to the world ! "

Then the elder cattle bowed their heads and said, " Amen ! " but the child started up and cried,—

" O foolish beasts, which know not the power ye possess ! Rise up and break the bonds which bind you ! Rush forth free and untamed into the wide world ! "

But the cattle heeded him not, standing silent in their stalls. Only the swallows stirred and twittered in the eaves above, and the child presently sank to sleep again.

But, when the day broke, he rose and crept away from the farm, for he thought, " If I stay here they

will perchance seek to make a servant of me, and I am no man's servant now!"

Nevertheless, in this he greatly erred, for whether he willed it or no, he was born to the service of God.

III.

For many days the child wandered on through the smiling fields whitening for the harvest, and ever and anon as he neared some village he would see bands of reapers going forth to their toil, singing glad songs; or would meet them returning home at the close of the day, weary, yet rejoicing in the glorious weather, and in the bounteous harvest which God had given them. Many amongst them would speak kindly to the child, and he always had food given him when he needed it; yet he would presently slip away from those who would have befriended him, saying in his heart,—

"These are all workers and toilers. Perchance, if I remain with them they will ask labour of me;" for his heart was yet set against any sort of toil, and as he went along and saw how the world toiled and laboured, he rejoiced to think that no man could ask service of him.

Anon he came, upon one hot, sultry day, to a village. The wide street was empty, for all the world was out in the harvest-fields, but the great trees which bordered the road on either side gave a grateful shade, and from the neighbourhood of an open

door, half-way down the street, came the cheerful ring of a blacksmith's hammer.

The child, being hot and weary, and disposed to linger in the shade, drew nearer, and, pausing by the open door, seated himself upon an upturned barrow and idly watched the flying sparks, and listened to the creaking of the bellows.

Many horses were waiting to be shod, and the smith attended to them in turn. But presently he gave a nod to his companion, who disappeared for a while, and he himself came out wiping his heated brow, and seated himself beside the child, in the cool shadow of the tree.

From beneath the barrow he drew forth provision for his mid-day meal, and, marking the weary and wistful face of the child, he gave him food and drink in abundance, and as they dined together he talked to him kindly.

“ Whence art thou, boy ? ” he asked ; “ for I know not thy face, albeit I have lived here, man and boy, all my life.”

“ I am from a far city,” answered the child ; “ a city that lies beyond yonder mountains.”

“ Nay, that is far indeed ! ” said the smith ; “ and whither away now ? For thou art over-young to wander alone through the world.”

“ I know not,” answered the child, and then he suddenly crimsoned, he scarce knew why, as he felt the eyes of the smith rest gravely upon him.

"Is it well to fly from the nest where the hand of God hath placed us?" questioned the man with gentle severity: the child hung his head and gave no answer.

Dinner being ended, the smith arose and girded on his leather apron afresh; then he turned into the forge and grasped his heavy hammer. But the child eyed him in surprise.

"It is so hot at noonday," he said; "surely thou wilt rest awhile ere thou dost labour again?"

The smith smiled as he swung his hammer, and blew up his forge with the great bellows.

"Nay, child," he answered, "rest cometh at night, and sweet it is to the weary who have earned it by the labour of their hands in the appointed place; but the day is given us by the Master for work, and He looks that we fulfil our allotted tasks with the best that is in us. Look, too, at yon patient horses, waiting to be shod, and think of the loads of golden grain awaiting to be drawn homeward by them! Suppose a thunder-storm comes up to-night, and the grain is not housed because the horses be not shod, and that because the smith was sleeping the noontide hour away when he should have been at work. A fine story that for the Master's ears!"

But the child looked about him round the forge, and said,—

"I had thought it all belonged to thee."

"Ay, so it does," answered the smith, "and was my father's before me."

"Then why canst thou not rest at thy will, since no man is thy master?"

But at that question the blacksmith turned upon him, and cried with a loud voice,—

"Child! Though the forge be mine, and the anvil and the iron, yet my time is not mine own, for I serve a Master to whom I must give account of each day as it passes. Yet," he added, in a gentler voice, "He is full of compassion and tender mercy, and hath pity on the weakness of His children."

And something in the good man's face made the child ask,—

"Dost thou find pleasure, then, in His service?"

And the blacksmith answered,—

"His smile is worth far more than ten thousand pieces of silver. Ah, my child, thou hast still much to learn, seeing that thou knowest not as yet thy Master."

But the words fell on unwilling ears, and in his heart the child said, "I have no master;" and presently, while the smith worked, he crept away in the lengthening shadows, for he feared lest the good man might seek to make him his fellow-labourer at the anvil.

IV.

Days and weeks rolled by, and the child still wandered on. He met kindness from the people through whose villages he passed, and food and shelter were given him, else must he surely have died. But

though his bodily needs were satisfied, a great hunger of the heart arose within him that was less easily appeased, for it seemed to him that he was quite, quite alone in the world, and that he had nothing to do—no part or lot with the busy life he ever saw about him.

The faces of the workers were happy, but his grew pale and thin. Men and boys sang at their toil, or called cheerily to one another, and the women in the houses laughed as they watched the gambols of their children, and would throw pitying glances on the toil-worn little traveller. He was never turned away from a hospitable door where he craved food or shelter, yet his loneliness grew ever greater and greater, and at last his strength began to fail him, till he oft-times felt he could scarcely drag himself along the road. Yet he still strove to journey on, he scarce knew why, save that he feared always, if he remained in any place, that he would be made a servant by the good people who befriended him.

This was why he would not stop, though almost too ill to trail himself along, until it came to pass that one day he fell beside the road, and lay there near unto death.

Now the place where he fell was a very lonely one, hard by a great wood, and for a long while nobody passed that way, but anon there came by a man, who, when he saw the child, stopped and looked earnestly upon him, and, seeing that he was very ill,

lifted him in his arms and bore him away to his own dwelling, which was in the heart of the great wood itself.

For many days the child lay upon the good man's bed, and it seemed as though the Angel of Death hovered very near to him ; yet God had mercy on the boy, and raised him up from his bed of sickness, and the care of the kind master of the house was rewarded.

Little by little the child was able to take note of the things about him, and to sit up in bed and see what went on; and that which struck him most as he watched the good man of the house was, that he was never idle. What it was that he did the child did not at first know, for he worked outside, and all the boy could hear was the ceaseless sound of tools, mingling often with the music of some song or chant which the worker would croon to himself. It sounded like carpentering work, the child thought, and as his strength returned he began to desire to go out and watch it. So one day, feeling stronger than he had done before, he rose and dressed himself, and made his way out into the sunny garden, glimpses of which he had seen all this while through the open casement of the window.

The garden was very full of flowers, which showed signs of tender care ; and to the right was a carpenter's shed, with all the tools and implements, and certain articles standing about, some only just begun,

and others quite or almost finished. The master of the house was not in the shed, but sitting in his garden, and in his hands he held a great piece of wood, fashioned in the shape of a cross, upon which he was carving, with wonderful skill and fidelity to nature, a wreath of flowers, copying these from the blossoms which bloomed around him.

When the child appeared, and timidly drew near, the good man greeted him with a smile.

“What art thou doing?” asked the child, “and wherefore dost thou put such strength and skill into a bit of wood? Is it not hard work to carve it thus? And of what use is it when done?”

With another smile the worker made reply,—

“It is hard work, truly, my child, but it is blessed work too, for this cross is to bear a message of comfort and hope to one who will rejoice to hear it.”

But the child’s face was full of perplexity, and his eyes asked the question which his lips knew not how to frame. The master of the house looked searchingly at him, and then said,—

“Knowest thou not, my child, that the cross is the symbol of all the pain or trouble or toil of this present life, which we are called upon to bear, and to share with Him who bore the cross for us, and who has said, ‘If any man would follow me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me?’ And yet, because He *hath* borne the cross first, He hath

hallowed and sweetened it for us. So that we who carry our crosses for love of Him, seeking to follow in His footsteps, find them so covered with flowers that we grieve not at their weight, but rejoice always in the fragrance of the flowers."

The child answered nothing, and the man presently spoke again, pointing, as he spoke, to a little wreath of smoke that curled up from behind the trees.

"In yonder cottage lives a sick woman upon whom the Lord has laid a heavy cross of pain and suffering. But she takes it from His hand, and makes no murmur. This cross, covered with the forms of beautiful flowers, I am fashioning for her."

Day by day, as the sun sank to his rest and the master of the house, putting aside his daily task, took out his cross and worked at the flowers on it, the child came forth and sat beside him, watching him and hearing him talk, and little by little it seemed to him that scales fell from his eyes, and that some change he could not understand was wrought within him.

When the cross was completed, he went with the maker of it to the humble cottage where the suffering woman lay, and he watched the light deepen in her eyes as she beheld the gift, and heard the words which the giver spoke of it.

As they left the cottage together, he stole his hand into that of his friend, and asked,—

"Why does she have that pain to bear? Is it not cruel of the Master to send her such a cross?"

"Nay, child," answered the good man; "we must not speak thus. The Master knows best. He gives to each his own cross, and blessed is every one who bears it after Him in meekness and lowliness of heart."

"Have we *all* a cross to bear?" asked the child. "I love not to bear nor to suffer. Fain would I enjoy my life and be happy!"

"And so thou shalt be, even in the cross-bearing, O child, if thou wilt walk after the Master and serve Him," answered the master of the house. "Hear His own words: 'Come unto me all that be weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest!' There is no rest, no earthly happiness that can compare with that which the Master gives to those who come to Him."

"But how can we come to Him?" asked the child; "and how can we bear our crosses after Him when we know not what they are, nor where to find them?"

But at that question the good man smiled and laid his hand upon the head of the child, drawing him between his knees as he seated himself anew in his garden.

"We have no need to seek crosses for ourselves, my child. The Master gives to each one of us that which He would have us carry. Often it may be

no heavier a one than the day's toil as it comes to us, wrought for Him with the best that is in us. All that we do can be done for Him. He has said so—and blessed be His name! Our daily toil is sometimes hard and cheerless of itself, but borne as the cross after the Master, it becomes sweet and blessed to us. The cross blossoms with flowers beneath His smile. Oh, taste and see how gracious the Lord is. Blessed is the man that trusteth in Him!"

Tears stood in the eyes of the child as he heard these words. He laid his hand upon that of his instructor and said,—

"Suffer me to dwell with thee and learn thy craft, and all that thou canst teach me. I would fain take up my cross and follow the Master. I would work with thee and for thee, and learn to serve others as thou dost."

But the master of the house looked long and earnestly at him, and answered with tender gravity,—

"No man putting his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." And as the child gazed at him with wondering and uncomprehending eyes, he added, still very gently, "It is not for us to choose our path, nor the cross we think is lightest and pleasantest to carry."

Then the child's conscience suddenly smote him, for he remembered the hods of mortar he had left lying in the great city, beside the unfinished church, and great tears rolled down his cheeks as he began to

understand that *there*, and there alone, lay the cross which the Master had given him to bear. But although he wept bitterly, yet his purpose did not falter. He would go back to his appointed task, and seek the cross he had flung away in impatient despite.

So he said farewell to his friend, who gave him a blessing with tears in his eyes, and began his weary and toilsome journey. Long and hard did the road seem, and often his heart wellnigh failed him, but still he pushed manfully on, for he had learned to look upwards for help and strength. He knew who was his Master.

He met many kindnesses to cheer him on his way, and now when food and shelter were given him, he would strive to repay his hosts ere he started in the morning by some simple act of service—cutting wood or carrying water, or even amusing a fretful child while the mother prepared the morning meal. Service was no longer hard and distasteful to him, for he strove to do all for the Master.

Many a time did some kind woman offer him service in a pleasant homestead, and greatly would the child have rejoiced to be saved the rest of that toilsome journey; but the memory of his forsaken task would come afresh upon him, and he resolutely journeyed on.

"Not mine, not mine the choice," was the cry of his heart; "I must bear the cross the Master laid upon me!"

V.

At last, as he journeyed onwards, he saw the walls of the city rise before him, and hastening onwards ever faster and faster, he approached the familiar town just as the last rays of the sun were illuminating the walls of the monastery and lighting up the beautiful white walls of the church. But what had come to those walls all this while? The child looked, and rubbed his eyes and looked again. For the structure which he had left all rough and unfinished was now a beautiful and stately building, complete in every detail, and upwards into the blue air soared the tapering spire, crowned with its cross, pointing ever upward towards the heaven beyond. And from within the building came a sound of music, like to the sound of many waters; and the child could hear the words of praise and thanksgiving that told of the pious joy which filled the hearts of the worshippers. And as he watched, it seemed to him that a great glory filled the air, and that a cloud of golden light descended upon the church, while grand, beautiful voices from within and without sang the glorious words of promise,—

“The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.”

Then the child suddenly understood the end and purpose of that toil which he had shunned—to raise a

holy house of prayer and praise that should teach men how to live and work that this glorious kingdom might the sooner come.

Now as he stood, watching with a full heart, he felt a touch upon his hand, and saw a hurrying throng going by, and one spoke in his ear and said,—

“Child, haste! haste! the Master hath come and calleth thee!”

And another voice took up the word and said,—

“He calleth for all those who have helped to rear this temple to His honour and glory.”

Then the child suddenly broke into bitter weeping, remembering how he had rejected his share of the work, and had left his hodfuls of mortar lying on the ground. Yet, in spite of his grief and shame, he was borne along by the crowd, and was aware of a strange and wonderful shining, the like of which he had never seen before; and casting himself down with his face to the ground he confessed his unfaithfulness, and prayed for the forgiveness of the Master.

Then it seemed to him that a hand was laid upon him, and a face looked down at him in infinite compassion and love, and a voice said in his heart,—

“Thy sin is forgiven thee. Arise and go in peace. Take up thy cross and follow me.”

And in his rapture the child smote his hands together and cried aloud,—

"O Lord, thy servant heareth!" and in so speaking he awoke.

Yes, he awoke, and behold it was all a dream! And he found himself lying beside his hodfuls of mortar beneath the unfinished walls of the church, while the men lay about resting from the mid-day heat, or eating their noontide meal.

All a dream! And the child's heart was full of joy; for he was still here, at his post. He could take up his cross and bear it in the Master's strength, for the Master's sake, and look forward in joy and hope to that glorious day when the Kingdom should be his for ever and ever.

And so deeply was the vision graven on his heart, that from that day forward toil was blessed to him, and his cross blossomed with flowers, for his work was done with all his might in the power of the Lord, wherefore it was a joy to him and not a source of sorrow; his heart was full of thanksgiving and praise.

Father Gottlieb noted the change in the once pale and sorrowful face, and pausing beside the child one day, he pointed upwards and asked,—

"What dost thou see there beyond, my child?"

And with a smile of beautiful radiance the child made answer,—

"I see the shining of the Master's face."

Then the good monk passed on his way rejoicing, and said in his heart,—

"Behold His servants shall serve Him, and they shall see His face. Hallelujah!"

The children were quite silent for several minutes after the reading of the story. Probably both entered more into its spirit than either could have explained. Herr Adler looked first at the one and then at the other, and finally asked smiling,—

"Well, am I to tell my young friend the author that two little boys have liked her story, and have learned something from it?"

"Oh yes, please," answered Squib, drawing a long breath; and then, after another fit of silent musing, he burst out in his sudden fashion,—

"O Herr Adler, I will try! I will try!"

Herr Adler did not ask what it was that Squib would try to do; but from the kind and gentle look that came into the good man's face, the little boy knew that he had been understood.

It was very hard to say good-bye. Squib needed all his manliness to hold back his tears; and Seppi's flowed freely down as their kind friend held their hands in his for the last time, and blessed them both, and kissed them before he took his way down the green slope. Squib went with him a little way, but would not leave Seppi for long, and with another rather husky good-bye, he turned just as the path entered the pine wood, and ran back to Seppi.

He found him lying on the grass, still crying ; but he soon wiped away his tears and sat up.

“ I shall see him again—somewhere. He said so himself ; I am sure it is true. I shall see him again some day. But we shall miss him so ! There is nobody else like him in the world. Oh, little Herr, I am so glad that you have seen Herr Adler ! ”

And Squib answered with earnest gravity—

“ And so am I ; *very* glad ! ”

CHAPTER X.

A MOUNTAIN STORM.

“ **H**E is more of a squib than ever,” laughed Colonel Rutland.

“ I told you he was too good company to be left at home.”

“ He’s a walking compendium of instruction, information, and anecdote,” added Mr. Lorimer. “ I always told you, Rutland, that that boy hadn’t got his square head for nothing. He will make his mark some day.”

“ We’re talking about you, Squib,” cried Uncle Ronald, catching sight of the boy. “ Come along, we’re just starting for a walk. You shall tell us a story as we go.”

“ Where are you going ? ” asked Squib.

“ To the head of the glacier over there. It’s about five miles off they say ; is that too much for you, eh ?

“ Five miles from here to the glacier,” said Squib, with a little twinkle in his eye ; “ but how far from the glacier to here ? ”

Then as the pedestrians looked at him and made no

answer, the smile beamed all over his face, and he said,—

“I’ll tell you a story. There was an Austrian lieutenant, and he had ridden to Vienna from Prague. He was dining with a noble lady, and at table they were talking about the distance it was between the two towns. The lady turned and said, ‘You have just come, sir; you can tell us how far it is from Vienna to Prague.’ Then the young man put his hands together and said, ‘Excellency, I can tell you exactly the distance from Prague to Vienna, because I have ridden it; but I have never been from Vienna to Prague yet, so I cannot tell you how far it is.’ Then everybody began to laugh, and the lady said, ‘But, my dear sir, it is the same.’ But he put his hands together again and said, ‘Excellency, from Easter to Pentecost is forty days, but from Pentecost to Easter is three hundred and twenty days! The distance from Prague to Vienna I can tell you, but the distance from Vienna to Prague I do not know.’”

“He was a smart fellow,” remarked Uncle Ronald laughing.

“Yes, he was very funny,” answered Squib, who having been, as it were, wound up, was prepared to “go off” considerably longer. “I will tell you another story about him. He was dining at an inn called the Golden Lion, and several of the people were teasing him and making fun, because he was so funny and silly. And the waiter who was attending them

came up and asked him a riddle, and said, ‘Who is it?—my father’s son, but not my brother?’ And he couldn’t guess, so by-and-by the waiter smacked his chest and said, ‘Why, myself of course,’ and then everybody roared with laughter, so that the young officer thought it must be very funny. Just a few days afterwards he was dining with the noble lady again, and at dinner he said suddenly, ‘Excellency, let me ask you a riddle. Who is it?—my father’s son, but not my brother.’ The lady said directly, ‘Why, yourself, of course.’ ‘No, Excellency,’ he said, putting his hands together, ‘not myself—the waiter at the Golden Lion!’”

The gentlemen laughed heartily at the story, and at Squib’s way of telling it, unconsciously imitated from Herr Adler.

“I suppose that’s another of your new friend’s stories? He must have had a wonderful memory, if he’s anything like what you represent him.”

“You couldn’t guess half how good and how clever and how interesting he is if you hadn’t seen him yourself,” answered Squib with enthusiasm. “Mother understands a little, because he once came here; but nobody could find out everything in one afternoon.”

For some little time Squib was the regular companion of his father and uncle on their walks; and he quoted Herr Adler morning, noon, and night, to the great entertainment of the party. These expeditions, many of them very interesting ones, helped Squib over

the blank which Herr Adler's departure had made in his present life. It was Herr Adler's stories that he quoted to the walking party ; but in his heart he turned over many of the other lessons he had received from his friend, and made numbers of resolves, many of which were never entirely forgotten or set aside.

But after spending a week or two at the chalet, the mountaineers went off for another spell of climbing at some distance. More visitors arrived from England to keep company with the ladies ; and Squib found himself once more free to resume his old habits, and to return to the Valley of the Silent Watchers, which always drew him like a magnet when he had nothing else to do.

How Seppi's thin face did light up with pleasure at sight of his friend !

"It seemed as if everything went away together when Herr Adler was gone and you had gone too," said the little goat-herd with patient sadness. "I know I oughtn't to say 'everything,' when there's so much left. I did try to think of all the things the good Herr Adler had told us. It helped a great deal ; but I am so glad to see you back."

"I'm glad to come," answered Squib truthfully enough, "I think I like our quiet days the best. But what will you do in the winter, Seppi, when I've gone right away to England, and Herr Adler won't be coming, and you can't go out on the hills and draw, and everything is different ?"

Sudden tears stood in Seppi's eyes at the question. He had grown to love Squib with that kind of passionate love that often grows up in the heart of a child, and becomes almost a pain at last. Squib had, as it were, rooted himself into the very fibres of his heart. He had not seriously faced the thought that the little boy was only a bird of passage ; that he was here just for a few short weeks, and then would go away, perhaps never to return. He had built up a fanciful idea of his own that the grand people from England, of whom the peasants spoke with reverence and respect, had bought the chalet for their very own, and would often come to it ; and Squib had spoken so much of his love for the valleys and mountains that Seppi might be pardoned for thinking he meant to stay there always. To the peasant boy Squib appeared like a little prince, able to come and go and do as he would ; and surely if he loved mountains and the free mountain life so much, he would be able to come very often to enjoy them, and stay a long time when he came.

"But—but—you are not going away, are you ?" he faltered ; "and you will surely come again ?"

"I'm not going away yet—not for a good many weeks," answered the other little boy, "but by-and-by we shall have to go back. I think we've got the chalet for three months. And I don't know about coming again. You see I shall be going to school soon, and then there will only be the holidays—and

those, I suppose, will be spent at home. When I'm a man, I think I shall often come to Switzerland and climb mountains, and do lots of nice things; but I don't think that will be for a good many years. None of the others have ever been abroad, and this is just a treat for me before I go to school."

Seppi's tears flowed silently down his cheeks as he heard this, and as he gradually came to understand from his comrade's explanations that Squib was not a fairy prince, able to come and go at will and do just what he liked, but a little English boy, bound by many rules and regulations, and with a regular round of duties mapped out for him for many years to come. His visions of constantly seeing the little Herr on the hills in summer began to dissolve like dreams at waking time, and his heart seemed to grow strangely heavy as he realized that he might not see his little friend any more after he once left, until both had grown to manhood.

"And it takes such a long, long time to grow up!" he sighed. "Peter is older than I, but he isn't grown up, though he has been talking of it and waiting—oh, ever so long! What shall I do when I never see you any more—and the years when Herr Adler doesn't come either?"

"I'll write to you," said Squib suddenly, putting out his hand and laying it on Seppi's; "I'll write you a letter every quarter, and I'll send you paper and chalk sometimes by parcel post;" and then warming

with his subject, he went on in his vehement fashion, "and I'll send you an envelope with one of your Swiss stamps on it, if I can get them, and you shall send me a drawing back, and if you can, you will write me a letter too, and tell me how you are, and how Moor is, and Ann-Katherin, and everybody, and the goats. Then we shall seem always like friends, and if I ever can I'll come and see you; only I can't promise, because I shan't be able to do as I like till I'm a man."

Making plans like this was the best substitute for Seppi's vague dreams of always having Squib near at hand. As the days flew by they made more and more detailed plans about keeping up some sort of a correspondence, and both were pleased to think that this friendship would not vanish away when the boy was carried off again to England.

All this while Squib had never seen Seppi's home, save at a distance. The little goat-herd never went back till after Squib had left him in the afternoon, and he was too lame to wander about for pleasure. Moreover, there were the goats to think of and care for, and it had never occurred to him that the little Herr could feel the smallest interest in so poor a place as his home.

Squib, however, had often looked across at it and wondered what it was like inside; but he had not invited himself there in case Seppi's mother might not like it. Yet he had a great wish to see her,

and Ann-Katherin too, and had sometimes thought he would ask Seppi to go home early some day and let him accompany him.

But before he had ever got to the point of doing so, a sudden visit was paid by him to the chalet in a quite unexpected fashion.

For some days it had been very hot indeed—so hot that the little boy had felt indisposed for anything but to lie about in idleness, and even the goats had done little but crowd together in the shelter of the rock and nibble a little bit of grass in quite a lazy way. The dogs seemed to enjoy the sultry weather most, lying side by side in the sun and basking there to their hearts' content; but sometimes it became too hot even for them, and they would retire panting into the shade with their tongues out, or trot down to the brook for a drink.

Hitherto the summer had been very fine and calm. Once or twice the boys had heard a rumble of thunder far away, but it had never come near them. Seppi had told Squib many stories of the violence of the summer thunder-storms in his valley, and Squib had wished he might see one; and now it seemed as if this wish were to be gratified.

It was the fifth of these very hot days. Squib thought it was the hottest day he ever remembered in his life, and wondered if India could be hotter. He and Seppi had to get under the great rock, where

the shade was densest, for the pine trees did not afford nearly enough shelter.

The sky was cloudlessly blue, and the mountains opposite looked nearer than they had ever done before. The Silent Watchers seemed to have even advanced a few steps nearer each other, and Squib felt that if any persons had been climbing their shining white sides, he would have been able to watch their movements. There was a great silence over the world, and, as Squib expressed it, "everything sounded hollow." He could not well have explained what he meant by this obscure saying; but Seppi understood in a moment, and said,—

"Yes, I think there will be a storm by-and-by. We must watch for it. If it comes it will be a bad one."

"I should like to see a bad storm," said Squib; but Seppi shook his head doubtfully.

"They are not always nice. Sometimes they are rather dreadful. Mother did not much like me to go so far to-day; but I knew you would be here."

"Yes, I didn't know you ever stayed away. But if you would like to be nearer your home—"

"Oh, I don't mind. If it looks like a storm we will move. But it is too hot now. I think Moor will know if one is coming. He is so sensible."

Both dogs were rather uneasy, though, perhaps, not more so than was accounted for by the great heat.

They kept out of the sun's rays to-day, and sometimes paced or moved about as if unable quite to get comfortable.

The boys lay on the dried moss and talked without attempting to work; and after they had eaten their dinner, for which neither felt any great appetite, they must have dozed off to sleep, for they were brought to a consciousness of their surroundings by the uneasy whining of Moor about his little master; and when they hastily sat up, they found that a change had come over the look of things.

Away in the east opposite them the sky was still blue and cloudless, and the snow glittered and shone as brightly as ever; but behind them had come up a great mass of purple-black clouds, edged with an angry livid red, and the air felt not only hot, but full of sulphur.

Seppi started to his feet with a little cry of alarm.

"The storm! the storm!" he cried. "Little Herr, we must run for shelter. Come with me! come to my home. You will never get to yours. And you must not go through the woods. The storm has come, and it will be a dreadful one. Oh, why did I go to sleep?"

Seppi was already summoning his goats by the familiar calls they knew so well, and Squib had his arm about him to help him down the hill.

"Run on without me!" cried Seppi, "I am so

slow. You can't miss the way—straight down the path and across the plank bridge, and there is the chalet just ahead of you."

But Squib only held him tighter by the arm.

"We will go together. I will help you," he said. "Czar will take care of the goats, and they know their way home. Come along," and as Moor came up to his little master to help him, the party was soon on its way down the side of the valley, Seppi finding the help of Squib's arm much better than that of his crutch.

Crash—bang—roar!

What an awful noise it was! and coming so close upon that blinding flash of lightning that Squib, who had learned something of the nature of thunder-storms, knew it must be dangerously near. Seppi knew it by experience, and gripped his comrade tighter by the arm. The air about them grew suddenly dark and stifling, the valley seemed filled with booming voices calling and shouting back to one another. Squib would have stopped to listen had not Seppi hurried him on.

"Don't waste a minute. It's coming right on us. Ask God to keep us safe. It's going to be an awful storm!"

These words, panted out in gasping fashion, awoke in Squib's heart a sense of personal peril which he had never before experienced in his short and protected life.

"Is it dangerous?" he asked in a low voice; and Seppi squeezed his arm as he said,—

"Men and beasts are killed on the mountains every year when these storms come. Oh, I ought not to have slept! I promised mother not to get into danger. Little Herr, do run on and get into shelter. It doesn't matter what happens t—"

The sentence was not finished; for so terrible a flash of lightning smote across their vision that both children started, clung together, and shut their eyes. Then just overhead, as it seemed, came that terrible crackling and crashing and roaring, echoed back from the mountains till the sound seemed more than human ears could bear. Squib involuntarily covered his, and hid his face till the violence of the explosion had passed, and when he looked up again it was to find himself enveloped in wreaths of suffocating vapour.

Seppi's white face seemed to be looking out of a strange halo, and he caught the gasping words,—

"O little Herr! your dog—your dog!"

Squib started, dashed his hand across his eyes and looked round him. A few yards from them stood Czar, upright, motionless, in a strange posture. And even as the boy looked, wondering at Seppi's cry, the huge creature dropped suddenly over on his side as if he had been shot, and lay motionless and rigid.

"Czar! Czar!" cried Squib, making a quick step forward. "Seppi! what is it?"

"He was struck by the lightning," answered the little peasant, "I saw it. I once saw a goat killed that way. It seemed as if fire was all round him for a moment, and the ground seemed to shake. Didn't you feel it? He was dead in a moment. I know how lightning kills. O little Herr, don't cry. It couldn't have had time to hurt him. And it might have been you—or me. It might have been both of us."

With an awed face Squib realized this truth. Well, indeed, might it have been either or both of them. He was too much shocked and bewildered for tears, and Seppi drew him insistently onwards, past the corpse of the noble hound—Squib could see for himself that no spark of life was left in him, and did not seek to linger—down towards the bridge, casting apprehensive glances behind him as he did so, towards the huge bank of lurid cloud. But the next minute—following almost immediately upon that fatal lightning flash, came a sudden gust of wind rushing up from behind them, and waking every pine tree in the valley into a whispering, moaning life; and as he heard that sound Seppi cried out,—

"Come quick! quick! The rain will soon be on us; and we must get across the bridge before it comes."

For a breathless three minutes they scrambled down—the goats having by this time taken themselves homewards as fast as their nimble feet would

carry them—and reached the bridge before any fresh development had taken place. But as they set their feet upon it the heavy cloud suddenly seemed to open its mouth in passing, and down came—was it rain? Squib gaspingly asked himself; it seemed rather as if the river itself had risen up and was tumbling bodily over them.

With a splash and a crash, and a roar of another kind, fell the torrent of lashing rain. Close as the two boys were to the chalet, they were wet to the skin before they reached it. It was just like being in the sea, Squib thought, when the great breakers come tumbling over you. He was by this time so blinded and bewildered by the terrific violence of the storm that he felt as if it were all part of a confused dream; and when he was drawn into shelter by kind, motherly hands, and heard around him a confusion of sympathetic voices, it was quite a number of minutes before he could really make out what was happening, or whether he was asleep or awake.

Gradually, however, the mists cleared from his eyes. He found himself in a strange room, standing before a fire of wood and stuff like peat which gave out a queer smell, and burned in a black-looking stove, and seemed not to have been lighted very long, though it burned hot and fiercely. There were three people in the place besides himself and Seppi—a woman with eyes like Seppi's, dressed as all the Swiss peasants are, and with a kind, motherly face, who was taking off his

wet jacket and calling out to somebody else to bring clothes from the press for the little gentleman ; a little girl with her hair tightly braided, and a pair of very quick black eyes, who darted off to do her mother's bidding ; and a big boy, many sizes bigger than Seppi, who was helping his brother off with his soaked garments, and talking to him about the storm in the rude dialect which sounded rougher from his lips than from the others'.

Everything went so quickly and briskly that, before Squib had time to collect his ideas, he found himself wrapped in queer but dry garments, perched on a rough chair by the side of the stove, while his own clothes were spread out in the heat to dry, the motherly woman keeping up a constant flow of pitying talk, and the little girl staring at him with her bright black eyes as if she would never stop.

" You are Ann-Katherin," said Squib, speaking for the first time.

She smiled all over her face and came a step nearer.

" You are Seppi's little Herr," she said ; " I know all about you. But where is your big dog ? "

A spasm crossed Squib's face.

" He is dead," he answered in a low voice ; " the lightning killed him just now."

Ann-Katherin's face was full of vivid sorrow and sympathy.

" Ah, the poor Hündchen ! And he so beautiful and faithful. Ah, but Seppi has told me of him, and

I love him. Oh, these cruel, cruel storms! They kill so many every year—men and beasts. But the good God took care of you and Seppi. You were not hurt?"

"No," answered Squib, a different look coming over his face, "we were not hurt. He took care of us."

That thought hindered Squib from any outbreak of sorrow over his lost favourite. Deeply as he grieved for the poor dog killed in a moment, he could not but feel that a sense of awed gratitude and thankfulness for his own escape must keep back his sorrow for the poor dumb animal. He was quite old enough and quite imaginative enough to realize the intensity of his own peril. God had protected him in the time of his danger. It would be ungrateful, therefore, to make too great a lamentation for the death of poor Czar.

"We will bury him to-morrow," said little Ann-Katherin. "Peter will dig him a grave. We will have a beautiful funeral. Seppi shall carve a head-stone, and we will always remember him."

This thought comforted Squib, and was afterwards carried out, and from that day forward the little boy often found his way to the chalet on the other side of the valley.

The storm had done much mischief to the garden, and Squib was pleased and proud to help to make things neat and tidy again. Seppi had taken a bad

cold from his wetting, and was not able to go out to the hillside with the goats. They fed nearer home with Moor and Ann-Katherin to tend them, and the others worked about the place, and Seppi did what he could, and carved a headstone (of wood) for Czar during his leisure moments. He was also engaged upon a portrait of the hound, enlarged from some of his many studies ; and when Squib had this presented to him in a little frame, made by Seppi also, he almost cried with pleasure and gratitude.

“But I wish Seppi would get strong and well again,” he said to his mother when displaying his treasure ; “I want us to go out together to feed the goats again.”

CHAPTER XI.

PLANS AND PROJECTS.

“**H**ULLO ! Here is Squib without his satellite.
Will wonders never cease ?”

Squib looked up with a start as this voice reached him, and found himself face to face with Uncle Ronald. He had been looking very serious as he came up the hill towards the chalet, but now his face beamed all over.

“ Uncle Ronald ! You have got back.”

“ Yes ; got back an hour ago, a few days before we expected. We’ve had a grand time of it. We’ll tell you all about it in good time. But what are you doing without Czar ? He has not deserted you surely ?”

The tears sprang suddenly to the child’s eyes.

“ Czar is dead,” he answered slowly.

“ Dead !” echoed Uncle Ronald, drawing his lips together in a low whistle. “ You don’t mean it, Squib ! What took him off ?”

“ He was killed by lightning in the storm,” answered Squib, turning his face away as he spoke.

"Killed by lightning! Good gracious! What a frightful thing! And where were you at the time, Squib?"

"Close by," he answered, and then was silent a long time. The young uncle did not like to ask any more questions; but Squib suddenly broke out in his impetuous fashion,—

"We were trying to get to the hut. Seppi said it would be a dreadful storm. Czar was a little in front, and the goats had run down far ahead. There had been one awful flash, and everything was dark and smelt as if the giant had been mixing his chemicals down in his cavern and had had an explosion; and then just as we got nearly down to the bridge there came another worse one, and *such* a clap of thunder! It made me hide my eyes, and when I looked up Czar was just tumbling over. Seppi said he had been struck—he had seen it. He has seen things like that before. He was dead in a moment. Seppi said it did not hurt him."

"Poor old fellow!" said Uncle Ronald softly. But whether he meant the dog or the boy he did not explain.

Squib was silent for several moments, and then burst out again,—

"We buried him with military honours. I took my flag, and there was a gun in the cottage, and Seppi's mother let Peter fire it over his grave. Seppi has made a headstone, and Ann-Katherin has planted

some flowers on it. I'll take you to see it some day."

"All right, old chap; I'll go and drop a tear for our faithful old friend Czar. But you must have had rather a narrow shave yourself, youngster. How far off were you when this happened?"

"Not very far. Czar always kept near me. Seppi thinks about twenty metres. That's what mother said. She cried when I told her, and I thought she was crying for Czar; but she said they were partly tears of joy, because I hadn't been hurt—nor Seppi."

Uncle Ronald's face was grave as he drew the child towards him. He, too, felt that he had come very near to losing his small nephew.

"I think I might have been killed but for Seppi," pursued Squib. "He made me come back with him when he knew the storm would be bad; and it was worse up the hill where I should have gone if he hadn't said I must come with him. Lots of trees were struck. They are lying about still right across the path. I shouldn't have known what to do; but Seppi did. Seppi knows a great deal about the mountains. He is a very nice boy. We are great friends."

At this moment Colonel Rutland appeared, and his greeting to Squib showed that he, too, had heard the story of the boy's narrow escape, and was feeling some considerable emotion at the thought of it.

Squib soon found himself telling the story of the

adventure in detail, and how kind Seppi's mother had been in drying his clothes and keeping him warm by the stove all the time ; and how Peter had set off in the pouring rain, directly it was safe to leave the hut, to take word to the chalet that he was safe, and to bring him down some dry garments, for his own were not fit to put on till the next day.

" I knew mother would be afraid about me," said Squib ; " but I didn't mean Peter to go. I wanted to go myself as soon as the thunder and lightning stopped, but Seppi's mother wouldn't let me. Peter went instead. Peter is a very nice, brave boy—although Seppi is really my friend."

He was silent for a short time, and then began again,—

" Father, I wish I might do something for them ! "

" For your friends in your favourite valley ? Well, Squib, what do you want to do ? "

" I don't quite know. I have so many plans. Father, haven't I a lot of money in the bank ? You know my godfathers and godmother always send me sovereigns on my birthday, and mother puts it in the bank. I think I must have a lot there now ; haven't I ? "

" Well, according to your ideas, I daresay you have. Twelve or fifteen pounds, perhaps."

To Squib that seemed a perfect fortune. His eyes shone brightly.

" Father, would that be enough to buy a cow ? or

enough to send Seppi to a school where he could be taught drawing and wood-carving, so that he could make his living? You know he is lame, and he is very delicate, too. He got a bad cold in the storm, and he has coughed ever since. I think if he could be sent to some warmer place in the winter, and be taught a sort of trade, it would be a very good thing. Do you think my money would do that? And do you think I might give it to him?"

"We will think about it seriously," answered Colonel Rutland smiling, "since it does seem as if Seppi's promptitude and presence of mind had saved you from possible danger. What is the name of this family in which you are so much interested?"

"Ernsthausen," answered Squib at once; "and Lisa knows all about them. They have lived here a long time."

But Squib suddenly found that his father was not listening any longer, but had turned to Uncle Ronald.

"Ernsthausen! Can it possibly be the same?"

"It may be; but one doesn't know how far the name may be a common one in these parts. I think Lorimer, who talked with him so much, said that he hailed from these parts."

"What is it, father?" asked Squib earnestly.
"What are you talking of?"

"Why, we had a guide called Ernsthausen—an uncommonly good fellow he was, too; and, though I said nothing about it to your mother in my letters,

we were once in a nasty predicament, and things might have gone badly with us but for Ernsthausen, who showed great presence of mind and courage. He would not take anything beyond his ordinary fee and small gratuity, saying he had only done his duty. But we thought very well of the man, and were talking about trying to find some way of helping him. Mr. Lorimer used to have long conversations with him that we did not understand. He may have found out something about him. Run and call him, Squib ; let us take him into counsel."

Squib, quite excited by the prospect of a council over his friends, at once jumped to his feet.

"I expect it's the same!" he cried eagerly. "Seppi's father *is* a guide, I know ; and a very good one. That's partly what makes them afraid when he goes away for the summer, and when storms come on. Gentlemen going long and dangerous ascents always try to get him, because he can be trusted. He gets well paid, of course ; but they are always afraid lest some harm should happen to him."

" Sounds rather like the same man, doesn't it ? " said Uncle Ronald. " Well, we'll see what Lorimer has to say about it."

Mr. Lorimer was soon there, and could tell them many things he had gleaned from the guide Ernsthausen. It very soon seemed almost certain that he was none other than Seppi's father, for he had spoken of having his home in a valley not far from the

chalet whither his gentlemen travellers were bound at the conclusion of their mountaineering trip, and he had certainly spoken more than once of a little lame son at home.

That quite settled the matter in Squib's mind, and he was quite excited to know what was to follow.

"I know what Ernsthausen has really set his heart upon," said Mr. Lorimer. "It has been a project of his for years, and he is saving money for it; but he is still some way from having sufficient to start it."

"What is that?" asked Colonel Rutland with interest.

"Well, I don't know whether you know how things are done in this country, but I will tell you something of it in brief. I may not be very accurate in detail, but the substance is true. If a man wants to undertake any big bit of work—build a hotel or pleasure resort, or even get himself a large farm, he scrapes together a certain sum, and then applies to the government for a loan sufficient to enable him to carry it out. He pays a modest rate of interest for this when the thing is started, and gradually pays off the debt as well if he is thrifty and careful; but the government has what we should call a mortgage, I suppose, on the place all the while; and if the man is a ne'er-do-well, or idle, or extravagant, and does not keep his pledges, government simply steps in and ousts him, and takes the place over bodily. I suppose he gets his own capital back; but I don't know the details, as I say.

I only know that that is the sort of thing that goes on, and explains the ease with which small men build and set going these monster hotels, which in England would ruin the first two or three proprietors very likely."

" Sounds a simple and Arcadian method," remarked Uncle Ronald ; " but what has all this got to do with Ernsthausen ? "

" Why, just this. He is very anxious to have a small hotel of his own for mountaineers ; just in that spot we have so often spoken of as needing one so badly—where all those valleys converge, and so many ascents can be made. It has been an idea of his for a long while, and he has been saving up all he can. His wife would manage the kitchen department, and his son would help in many ways, and he would still do a certain amount of his old work for the gentlemen he knew, but gradually grow independent of it as his strength diminished. He has been thinking of the scheme for years, always afraid lest somebody should be beforehand with him ; but he does not think he has yet quite sufficient to get the advance from government. He told me that in two or three years he hoped to make a start. But often some calamity in the winter to his home, or some failure in the crops, has obliged him to draw upon his savings. I thought, then, that it would be a happy notion to make over to him the balance he needs ; but, with a man of free, independent character, it is not easy to

tender help. He is proud, this Ernsthausen, with all his poverty."

"And a good thing, too," breathed Uncle Ronald softly. "That is a complaint I wish more poor people suffered from in these days!"

But Squib, who had been listening breathlessly all this time, now burst into excited speech.

"Oh, father, do let me give my pounds to Seppi! and let me tell him all about it. I don't think he knows; but I believe he would be glad, because they are always so sad when their father goes away. It would be beautiful if they all lived together always, and had a place of their own, and took in travellers, and were not so poor. I don't think they mind being poor. I think they are wonderfully good; but it would be nice for them not to have to be afraid about their father any more, and to be with him all the year."

"Well, we will think about it," answered Colonel Rutland. "I shall make inquiries, and see what I think can be done. We must first make sure that the family is the same; and then we will see how we can go to work. I should like to help them very well, I confess; but we must not be in a hurry."

Squib always was in a hurry; and he found all this very exciting. He wanted to talk it over with Seppi at once, but he resolved not to do so till things were more settled.

But he was off early next morning to the valley,

and to his surprise and pleasure found Seppi on his old knoll by the fir-trees, with his sketch-book and chalks beside him. He was looking eagerly out for Squib, to hail him as he passed, fearing lest he should plunge straight down to the bridge.

Moor, too, was on the lookout on his own account, and came bounding up to him, pushing his black nose into his hand, and soliciting notice. Moor had been very affectionate to Squib ever since the death of Czar. It seemed as if he recognized the child's loss, and tried to show sympathy in his own way. Squib repaid this affection warmly, and thought Moor, next to Czar, the nicest dog in the world. He followed him willingly enough to Seppi's knoll.

"You are up here again, Seppi! That is nice!"

"Yes; I wanted to come again," said Seppi with a wistful look round him. "I do so love the mountains; and I cannot see them properly from the other side."

Squib sat silent a little while thinking, and then asked,—

"Do you think these mountains are so much better than any other mountains? Would you be very sorry to go away and leave them?"

There was a strange look in Seppi's eyes as he looked straight out before him.

"I—I—don't quite know," he said softly, almost more to himself than to his companion. "Sometimes I think—perhaps—it would be better there."

Squib shot a little glance at him from under his

brows. Seppi's face wore the sort of look one sees on the face of a person who is looking on things from which he is soon rather likely to have to part. And the younger boy recognized this look at a glance.

"He does know something about it," he said to himself. "Perhaps his father doesn't want it talked about, and so he keeps it to himself. But he has heard something, I am sure. I hope he does not mind very much."

There was silence a while between the children, and then Squib asked in a tentative fashion,—

"You are not unhappy, Seppi?"

The dark eyes were turned full upon him, and Seppi smiled.

"No," he answered softly, "I don't think I am unhappy, little Herr; I have thought about it so often. I think it will be better really, perhaps; only—only—well, I suppose it is always rather hard to go away when one loves everything so much."

"Yes," answered Squib with sympathy, "I think that is the hard part of it—and you love your valley so much. But you know it will be just as beautiful there—perhaps it may even be more beautiful. We don't know because we have never seen it."

Seppi gently shook his head, and smiled.

"That's always what I try to think—that it will be so much more beautiful than this that I shan't want ever to come back. I don't suppose people

ever do really. Only sometimes one can hardly help thinking one would."

"No, of course not," answered Squib eagerly, "and you especially, because you are so fond of your valley and mountains; but I think the other will be better. I really do."

"I think so too—really," answered Seppi softly. "I'm glad you know about it, little Herr. I didn't know whether I could talk to you about it."

"Oh yes, you can—if you like," answered Squib eagerly; "I didn't know you knew anything about it yourself. I shouldn't have said anything if you hadn't. But I do like to know what you think about it. Will you mind going very much?—and will Ann-Katherin mind?"

Seppi's face looked very grave and rather sad.

"Ann-Katherin does not know," he answered very softly. "I couldn't tell her; she would cry so. I don't speak about it to any one; but I am sure mother knows. She cries often, but she doesn't talk about it."

Squib felt a little puzzled.

"But isn't she rather glad too? Doesn't she like to think of having your father always there, and his not going so much up the dangerous mountains?"

It was Seppi's turn to look puzzled now.

"I don't quite understand you, little Herr."

Squib turned a bright look upon him.

"Why, about the hotel, you know, which your father wants to have down in that other valley where

there isn't one. Weren't you talking of that all the time? I thought he had told you all about it, only it was a secret."

Seppi's bewildered face astonished Squib not a little.

"I don't know what you mean, little Herr."

"Didn't he ever tell you about it, then?—or your mother?"

Seppi shook his head.

"I've never heard anything about it."

"Then what did you mean about going away?"

The children looked into each other's eyes, and Squib felt a sudden stab of pain somewhere which he did not understand.

"Tell me what *you* meant," said Seppi after a pause.

"Why did *you* think I was going away? And what do you mean about a hotel?"

Squib looked eager, yet doubtful.

"I'm not quite sure if I ought to tell. If I do, it must be a great secret, Seppi."

"Oh, I won't tell; but I should like to know. It would be something to think about when I am thinking of them all. Will you please tell me, little Herr?"

"Do you know what a hotel is, Seppi?"

"Yes, father talks about them sometimes. People stop there and have their food and beds. Father once said that he should like to keep one himself. It paid very well when it was well managed, and he should

like the life. But mother said it was no use thinking of it, because they should never have the money."

"Oh, then you *do* know!" cried Squib eagerly. "I'm so glad; because I *think* perhaps your father will have the money quite soon; and then he'll begin to build, and perhaps by next spring you will all go and live there. It would not be your own valley, of course, but Uncle Ronald says it's one of the most beautiful valleys in all Switzerland."

Seppi's eyes were shining now with excitement.

"Oh, how wonderful! Would they really! Oh, how do you know about it? Mother doesn't know, I'm sure; I should know if she did. How can father get the money?—and how do you know, little Herr?"

Squib nodded his head sagely. He wasn't going to be betrayed into any premature disclosures, nor did he quite know how people were going to manage matters; but he knew that what his father took in hand always was carried through somehow, and so he had no doubts at all.

"My father told me," he answered proudly. "My father is a very good man, and he knows a great deal. Your father was his guide, and he saved his life; and mother and they all think that you saved me from being hurt in the storm. That's what makes them all so interested in it. When my father means a thing to be done, it always is done," concluded Squib rather grandly, though without any assumption. "He has been a soldier, you know, and has always had people

obeying him. Things always come right when he takes them in hand. Everybody says that."

The lame boy's eyes were shining brightly.

"Oh, I am so glad! I am so glad!" he whispered. "I didn't know how to think of leaving mother and Ann-Katherin before; but if they go away somewhere else, and if they have a different home and a different valley, they will not miss me the same way. How good God is to us!" added the boy with sudden vehemence. "Just as Herr Adler says. He does everything we ask Him, and ever so much that we should never have thought of asking. He is good and kind!"

Squib was looking rather disturbed.

"I don't quite understand you, Seppi. Why do you talk about going away, except to the new home?"

Seppi turned his eyes over towards the mountains, and Squib saw how pinched and thin his face had grown. He began to apprehend the meaning of the words, though he did not fully comprehend them.

"I think I shan't be here in the spring to go with them," said the lame boy quietly. "The doctor said last time that another cold would make an end of me. There's been something wrong here," touching his chest, "ever since I was all those hours in the ice-cave. Every winter they think it will be then; but I'm sure it's coming now."

Squib looked very much awed, but not afraid.

The thought of death is not in itself terrible to children. Their hold upon life is not very strong, and their simple faith carries them over all perplexities and misgivings.

"Do you mean you will not get better?" he asked softly.

"I don't think I can. I feel so very weak, and at night I can't breathe, and I have to sit up and pant. I am best out on the mountains; but soon I can't be there any longer. If it were not for mother and Ann-Katherin I think I should be glad. It isn't good being weak and lame, and not able to do anything like other boys and men. In God's garden it will not matter. I shall be like the others there."

"God's garden!" repeated Squib quickly.

"Yes; I once had a dream about being in God's garden. I can't explain how it was; but there was a beautiful garden with mountains all round it, and flowers growing everywhere. And I was one of them; and I knew that the others had been live people once, and had died and been taken there to rest and sleep until the resurrection. And we were all so happy. And presently a whisper ran through that the Lord was coming, and that we were to be ready for Him; and that made me so glad and happy that I awoke before He had come. But I always remember my dream; and once I told it to Herr Adler, and he told me that he knew many good men who had dreamed something very much the same.

So when I think of being dead, I never feel as if I should be in a narrow grave in the cold and the dark, but be a flower in God's garden, just waiting for the Lord to come."

Squib's eyes were bright with interest and sympathy.

"That was a nice dream," he said. "I shall think about that often. I am glad you told it me."

"I'm glad I've talked to you," said Seppi. "I was feeling rather unhappy before you came, and now I am quite happy again. I think mother and Ann-Katherin would have missed me so if they had stayed always here; but if they go to another place, it will be quite different. They will have a lot of nice things to think of, and that will keep them happy."

"Will Ann-Katherin mind leaving the valley?"

"I don't think so if I'm not there. I think she will be glad to go. Ann-Katherin loves the mountains and the goats and everything here, but she likes change too. If there are mountains and pretty things where she is going, I think she would like it better. She would like to see a lot of people; and Peter will be very happy."

Seppi had so much to talk of and think about that his face quite beamed, and lost its pinched, wistful expression.

"Perhaps he will get better," thought Squib to himself, as at last he rose and made his way home.

CHAPTER XII.

FAREWELLS.

THAT was the last time that Seppi and Squib sat together upon the knoll beside the fir trees, looking out across the valley at the great range of snow-peaks opposite.

When next Squib found his way there, no Seppi was to be seen. Three days had passed since they had held their talk together about leaving the green valley they both loved, and those three days had been full of interest to the little boy.

For Mr. Lorimer and his father had been making inquiries about the Ernsthause family, and had established the identity of Seppi's father with the guide who had served them so faithfully, and had saved Colonel Rutland's life at the risk of his own. Squib's story of little Seppi and his patience and goodness touched the heart of his mother very much. Lady Mary had heard much of Seppi during the past weeks; and ever since the storm, when she had been so alarmed for a couple of hours about her son, she had felt great gratitude to the little goat-herd who

had so promptly taken him into shelter, and to the whole household in the humble home who had cared for him, and had sent to relieve her anxiety. She entered with much sympathy into Squib's eager desire to help the family to set up for themselves in the way the father had long desired ; and she told Squib that since his father had taken up the matter she was very sure it would all come right in the end.

" May I tell Seppi so ? " asked Squib eagerly, and his mother said she thought he might, if Seppi could be trusted to keep the secret for a little while till things were more settled.

" Thank you," said Squib, " I should like Seppi to have the pleasure of knowing about it and thinking about it beforehand. Mother dear, don't you think a clever doctor might make Seppi well again ? Uncle Ronald was soon made quite well when he came home ill."

Lady Mary shook her head sorrowfully.

" I am afraid, my darling, from what I hear that poor little Seppi's days are numbered. But you know that his crippled life here could not be such a very happy one. He would feel his lameness more and more as he grew older, and the Loving Shepherd knows what is best and happiest for His lambs."

The tears sprang to Squib's eyes as he heard those words, and he pressed up to his mother's side.

" Did you feel like that, mother," he whispered, " about *my* little brother when he died ? "

For that little brother whom he could not remember had always seemed to Squib to belong especially to himself, and his mother's arms pressed him very close as she answered,—

"That is how I try to think of it now, darling. It was very hard to give him up at the time, but I am quite willing to believe that the Lord knows best, and by-and-by we shall understand all those things which seem so hard to bear now."

"Yes," answered Squib quickly and earnestly, "when the Lord comes to make all things new, and His Kingdom begins to come. Oh, how I wish it would come quickly!"

The mother looked earnestly into her child's face and saw that the boy's eyes were fixed intently upon the blue distance before them. Some new thought was struggling in his mind.

"Mother," he said, "do you know that there *is* a little bit of this earth in glory now? I don't quite know how to say it, but that's just what it is. One little bit has been glorified and has its resurrection life already. Did you know?"

Lady Mary slightly shook her head.

"I do not quite know what you mean, dear child. I suppose it is something Herr Adler told you?"

"Yes," answered Squib; "it's so beautiful and so interesting. Mother, it's the Lord Himself who has been glorified. You know He rose out of the grave with the same body as He had on earth, which was



"Seppi drew Squib's hand down upon the head of Moor."

made of the earth—only in resurrection it was different. But it *was* the same body, for there were the marks of the nails and the spear; and that body has been taken up to heaven and glorified, so that just a little bit of our earth is glorified in Heaven now. Mother, Herr Adler says that when the Lord has begun a promised work, it is a sure and certain pledge that He will finish it when the right time has come. And so we know that by-and-by we shall have resurrection bodies given us, and shall be glorified too. He says that that is what David meant when he said: ‘When I awake after Thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it.’ You see *he* knew about it somehow, even though Jesus hadn’t come then.”

Lady Mary kissed her child lovingly.

“I am glad you had so many beautiful talks with Herr Adler,” she said. “Always try to remember what he taught you, dear.”

“I will,” answered Squib earnestly; “I think he is the *goodest* man I have ever seen.”

And having kissed his mother, Squib went off to find Seppi, but the knoll was not occupied to-day.

“He will be nearer home,” said Squib, preparing to descend, and sure enough he came upon his companion lower down the valley, but on the far side of the bridge.

The face raised to greet him was bright, although it looked very sharp and worn; and there was creeping over it, under the brown, a curious grey look.

"Little Herr, I thought you would come to me. I tried to get to our knoll, but I couldn't."

"Why couldn't you?" asked Squib with solicitude.

"I felt so queer, and all my breath went away. I had to sit down; but I thought if you came you would come down. I don't seem to have any room to breathe if I go uphill."

"Poor Seppi!" said Squib pitifully; "does it hurt much?"

"Oh no! I don't have any pain. And I'm used to it at night. Generally I am pretty comfortable by day. Little Herr, we had a visit yesterday from a friend of father's."

"Did you?"

"Yes, and he says father is rather disturbed, because he has heard that somebody has been talking about buying the piece of ground he wants so much for the hotel he has been thinking of so long. He has heard that a gentleman has been inquiring about it."

Squib's face beamed all over.

"That's my father," he said in an important whisper. "My father has *such* good ideas. He set somebody to ask about the land before he came back here. I suppose that is what your father has heard of. But he need not really mind; for if my father buys the bit of land, he will give it to your father, I know."

"O little Herr! It seems too good to be true!"

"Oh no; only one of those nice things that grown-up people can do. That's what I should

like to be grown-up for—I should have so many nice plans.”

The boys sat thinking each his own thoughts, and then Squib said,—

“I suppose your mother told you about it, then, because you didn’t know much the other day.”

“Yes, she told me in the night, when I couldn’t go to sleep. We had a nice long talk about lots of things. She talked about father’s plan; but I didn’t tell her what you had told me. I thought it was a secret.”

“I think it is just now, till something has been settled. O Seppi! I wish you and I could go together to see the valley, and make plans about your new home there.”

Seppi looked all round him, up and down his own valley, and away towards the Silent Watchers guarding it on either hand, and said,—

“I think I like this one best. I don’t think I want to go to the other, though I like to think of them there. Little Herr, will you ever go to see it some day, when you are a man?”

“Oh yes!” cried Squib eagerly. “When I’m a man I shall do lots and lots of things. I mean to be a mountaineer for one thing, like Mr. Lorimer, and climb all the mountains that can be climbed, and I shall have your father for my guide, and I shall stay at his hotel, and we shall be great friends. You know he was very brave, and saved my father’s

life. I shall never forget that. It's not the sort of thing one ever does forget."

Seppi looked very pleased and happy.

"I think father is a very brave man," he said, "though he never talks about the brave things he does."

"I don't think really brave men do," answered Squib, with decision. "The boys at school say that it's always the cowards and the bullies who do the bragging and the boasting; the really brave boys don't have to be always telling of themselves."

Seppi quite agreed in this, and told a few stories he had heard from others of his father's prowess, and they drew many happy fancy pictures of the days to come when Squib should become a great mountain climber, and Ernsthausen should go with him right up into the land of cloud and snow, across the blue mysterious glaciers, and ever upwards and onwards to the soaring peaks beyond. Squib's face flushed with delighted anticipation as he lifted it towards the eternal snows and thought of all the triumphs that lay before him; but presently his expression changed, and putting out his hand he took Seppi's gently in it, and said,—

"I wish you could go too!"

Seppi smiled without any sadness.

"But, little Herr, I never could climb, you know," and he looked at his poor, little, shrunken limb.

"I know," answered Squib quickly, "but I mean I wish that *that* hadn't happened to you."

The little goat-herd looked thoughtfully out before him.

"I'm not sure that I do," he said.

"O Seppi! what do you mean?"

"I was thinking," answered Seppi dreamily, "that if I had been strong and active like Peter, perhaps I should not have had the goats to mind. I think Ann-Katherin would have taken them, and I should have worked at home with mother and Peter; and then, you see, I should not have had all those talks with Herr Adler, and I should not have had my drawing; and I should not have had *you*, little Herr!"

"O Seppi! but to have been strong and well would have made up for that," said Squib, whose active spirit could not imagine a more terrible loss than that of the power of locomotion.

"I don't know," answered Seppi. "I think I am happier than Peter, who is strong and big. I don't think I want to be anybody else. It's just as Herr Adler said it would be."

"What did he say?" asked Squib, with interest.

"It was the first time he came; at least, the first time I can remember about. I was out with the goats. I had not been lame long, and I was often unhappy. I missed the things I had been used to do, and I wanted to do them again. I was crying about it one day, and he saw me, and came and sat down by me and talked. He said such beautiful things."

"Tell me what they were."

"Yes; but I can't make them sound as he does, you know. He first told me about how God had taken care of me down in the ice, and had helped father to get me up safe again; and he said I must not think any more about its being the ice-maidens, because that was nothing but the fancy of people who lived amongst mountains, and that God would never let His children be subject to such beings, even if they had any existence; but when I cried again about being lame, he was kinder still, and told me that it was perhaps because the Lord loved me that He had laid His hand upon me, because it says somewhere that whom He loveth He chasteneth —it is in the Bible."

Squib nodded his head.

"Yes, I know. I came upon it reading once with mother. I said it seemed like you."

Seppi's face flushed with pleasure and gratitude.

"Did you? How kind to think of me, little Herr! Well, I won't tell you the things of that sort which he said. I expect you know them all yourself; but he told me other things that I had never thought about before. He said that if God took away from us one of our powers, He was always ready to make it up to us by giving us more of another; and that, if we could learn to be submissive, and to take everything He sent us as His gift, we should soon find that we were not the worse, but the better for it!"

"O Seppi—how?"

"Well, I didn't understand then, but I do now. He told me I must use my eyes if I could not use my legs, and that I should see as many wonderful things going on around me as if I could scour the woods after them; and indeed it's true. Just sitting still anywhere, and listening and watching is *so* interesting; and then watching the shapes and the colours of things put it into my head to carve and draw; and that *has* made me so happy. And then the farmer down in the big *thal* gave me Moor for my very own, which he never would have done if I hadn't been lame; and so you see how many, many things I have got by it. And I often think I've been happier than Peter, though he is so strong and can go anywhere."

"Do you think you are?" asked Squib.

"I often think so. Peter doesn't care a bit to watch the mountains, and he doesn't know how beautiful they can be. He never listens to what the water says, and he doesn't know a bit how happy it makes one to see beautiful things and think about how they come to be there. Herr Adler says that if we only have eyes to see and ears to hear, everything in the beautiful world tells us about God and His Kingdom, and I'm sure it does. It has made up for everything to me. I don't think I want anything different now."

Squib heaved a little sigh as he said,—

"Well, if you don't want it different, I'll try not to want it either. But I can't help thinking how nice it would be if you could have been my guide some day when we were both men, and I came to stay in your father's hotel."

The talk about that hotel was a great amusement and pleasure to the boys in the days to come. Seppi was failing rapidly. He was still able to be out near home with the goats, and Squib would join him almost daily, often with some interesting piece of information about the negotiation of the land purchase, which was going on still. Colonel Rutland was buying the site, Squib presently informed Seppi, and he would then make it over to Ernsthause as his own. Then, after the sale of the present plot of ground and chalet, the man would have enough with his savings to ask the needful loan from government, and commence the building. It would not take long to run up the modest building he required, and by the following spring he would be able to open it for the use of mountaineers, for whose resort it was mainly to be put up. The children were never tired of talking about it, and by this time the whole family knew what was on foot, and were in a state of excitement and pleasure. Peter was going to realize his dream, and live a wider and more exciting life, not quite so much shut in as now by the limits of the narrow valley. The mother would not be separated from her husband during the summer, and would have congenial occupation at his side; and

as for Ann-Katherin, she caught the prevailing excitement without exactly knowing what it was all about, and thought that everything would be delightful, though she could not at all imagine living anywhere but in her own beautiful valley.

Moor was the only member of the household that seemed unhappy at this juncture. Was it that the sensible fellow had a premonition of coming change? or did some instinct tell him that all was not well with his little master? The boys could not tell. All they knew was that the dog was restless and unhappy; that he followed their movements with his eyes in a wistful and imploring manner; that he whined a good deal at night, and was only quieted by being put to sleep upon the foot of Seppi's bed; and that on the days when Squib failed to appear, he had been known to set off to meet him and hasten him, and not finding him, had come home very dejected, and had been restless and uneasy all day.

"He is so very fond of you," Seppi often said when telling Squib of this. "I think he likes you next best to me of anybody. He only seems really happy when we are together. Poor Moor! he is such a faithful friend. I do love him so! I think he understands everything I say!"

Squib had been detained at home one whole day, first by a rainy morning, and then by a walk with his father, which had kept him away from the valley where Seppi was half-expecting him. He did

not always go, but since his time had begun to get short (for they were to leave the chalet soon), he tried hard to see his friend daily, for he knew that his visits were eagerly looked for, and he sometimes had some interesting bits of news to communicate.

He had planned to start off for the valley next day as soon as ever his early breakfast had been dispatched ; but before he was up in the morning—when, in fact, the day was only beginning to brighten in the east—he was awakened by a strange sound of snorting and scuffling just outside the little door-window which opened on his balcony, and he sat up listening with a beating heart and a strange feeling creeping over him, for it was just that sort of noise that Czar used to make when he came up sometimes to suggest that they should have an early walk together. But poor Czar lay in his grave on the hillside. What could this noise mean ?

Squib sprang out of bed and pattered across the bare floor in his little night-shirt. He unfastened the bolts and opened the window, when in ran Moor, his coat wet with dew, his eyes full of that unspeakable wistfulness seldom seen in any eyes save those of a dog, and his whole manner full of such an eager intensity of purpose that Squib knew in a moment that something unwonted had happened or was happening.

“ What is it, Moor ? What is it, good dog ? ” he asked. “ And oh, Moor, how did you find your way

here?" for Squib suddenly remembered that Moor had never been to the chalet before, and had never accompanied him further than to the ridge just above the knoll with the fir-trees, where he had first seen Seppi and his goats.

Moor could not answer, but he whined round the child, putting up his paws and seeming to try as hard as he could to tell him something.

Squib understood dog-ways and dog-talk almost as well as dogs understood him, and he quickly comprehended that Moor wanted him to go with him somewhere.

"I'll come! I'll come!" he answered, and began hurrying on his clothes. Moor was satisfied the moment he saw this, and ran to a water-jug to slake his own thirst, for he had plainly run fast and hard. Squib was not many minutes in getting into his clothes, and as soon as he was dressed he paused for nothing save to get a few biscuits out of a cupboard, some for himself and some for Moor, as they ran down the staircase and through the dewy grass together.

"Is it Seppi?" asked Squib anxiously; and at the sound of the familiar name the dog looked backwards over his shoulder and uttered a little, low whine.

"Did he send you for me?" said Squib again, still running onwards along the familiar track, with Moor always a few yards in advance. But Moor only wagged his tail that time and said nothing, and the pair sped on in silence.

"Something is the matter," said Squib to himself, "and Moor will show me what it is. Can Seppi have fallen, or be in danger? But then Moor would have run home for help. Besides, Seppi could not be out so early. He is not well enough."

Down the side of the valley plunged Squib in the wake of the faithful Moor, looking keenly to right and left as he did so, but seeing nothing to attract his attention or account for the eagerness of the dog.

At last they reached the bridge, and were quite near the chalet. Squib suddenly began to wonder what they would think there of his appearing at such an hour, and, for a moment, he paused, as though in doubt; but Moor uttered a quick, sharp bark, either of joy or command, and out from the chalet darted a little bare-headed figure, and Squib heard Ann-Katherin's voice raised in sudden excitement and relief.

"Mother, he has come! He is here! Mother—Seppi—the little Herr has come!"

The next moment Frau Ernsthauseñ herself had come running out, and she met Squib a few paces from her door. Her face was pale and stained with weeping. Her voice shook as she held out her hands.

"Ah, the good God must surely have sent His angel to tell you! Oh, how my poor little Seppi has been calling for you!"

"Moor came for me," answered Squib, rather bewildered and awed. "What does Seppi want?"

"Ah, don't ask! don't ask! My child is dying!" cried the poor mother, her tears gushing forth again. "Peter is away for the doctor. I could not let Ann-Katherin go, nor did she know the way. But all the night through he has been asking for you. Oh, thank God that you have come in time!"

Very full of awe, but without any sense of fear, Squib entered the low door, and found himself in the familiar room. A shaft of sunlight entered with him, and Seppi, who was lying in his bed propped up high with pillows, stretched out his arms to him with *such* a smile of welcome.

"The angel *has* brought him, mother!" he cried, in a quick succession of panting breaths. "I see the shining of his wings. How good God is!"

Squib went straight up and took Seppi's two hands.

"I have come," he said simply. "Moor came for me; he said you wanted me, Seppi!"

The eyes, so wonderfully bright and full of the intense light which is not of this world, suddenly drew off, as it were, from looking out into space and fastened themselves on Squib's face. Seppi smiled a different kind of smile now, but it was a very happy one.

"I am so glad you have come," he said; "I did so want to see you again. I have something to give you, little Herr. Will you let me?"

"O Seppi, yes. Is it anything I can do for you?"

"Yes; I want you to have Moor," said Seppi, still

panting out his words in the same quick, breathless way. "I want you to have him for your very own. He loves you next best. He would be happy with you. Will you have him?"

"O Seppi, don't give him away yet; you may want him again," sobbed Squib, overcome for a moment by the sense of near parting which this request brought home to him.

A quick, strange smile flashed over Seppi's face, over which a grey shadow was falling.

"No," he whispered, "I shan't want him any more; but I love him. He brought you. He will miss me most. Please have him and keep him for me," and possessing himself of Squib's hand, Seppi drew it down upon the head of Moor, who had stretched himself upon the bed beside his little master, and who now licked the joined hands of both children, with his eyes full of tears.

"I'll keep him," answered Squib, steadying his voice. "He shall come home and live with me. I will make him happy."

Seppi smiled. It seemed the last little cloud upon his mind. Now that he was satisfied he lay back on his pillows and put out one hand to his mother, the other lying still in Squib's close clasp upon the head of the dog.

"Tell me about 'He shall give His angels charge,'" he whispered the next moment. Seppi looked at the mother, and the woman looked back at him, and then

Squib, suddenly thinking of Herr Adler and some of the things he had said, answered with one of his own bursts of subdued vehemence,—

“Seppi, I daresay the angels are here. I daresay it was they who helped Moor to find me and bring me; but that doesn’t matter. The Lord Jesus is here Himself, and I think you will see Him soon. Never mind anything else. He is coming.”

Seppi’s eyes filled suddenly with strange light, and then the lids closed, and the quick panting breathing grew very slow—and then stopped.

“Jesus has come!” said Squib in his heart, and he turned by a sudden impulse and put his arms round the neck of the weeping woman on her knees beside him.

“Seppi is not lame any more,” said Squib softly.

CHAPTER XIII.

GOING HOME.

IT was the last day at the chalet. On the morrow Colonel Rutland and his party were to start for England and home.

Squib stood holding his father's hand beside a little newly-made grave in the quaint little burying-ground of the little church on the hillside, just where it began to slope gently down towards the wider end of the valley where the small township lay.

Squib held in his hands a wooden cross about three feet high. He had spent the last days of his stay in Switzerland in carving that cross, and in striving to put into it some of the many imaginings which crowded his busy brain. For a child's handiwork it was very creditable. There was a lily carved upon the upright bar, standing out in bold relief, and the greatest pains had been taken with the shape and veining of every leaf and petal. At the very top of the cross the word "SEPPİ" was cut in small capitals, and that was all. The lower end of the upright bar was pointed, and as Squib stood at the little grave looking

very seriously upon it, he gave a questioning look up into his father's face, and on receiving a nod of assent he moved forward and drove his cross into the ground just at the head of the little grave. The earth, having recently been loosened, gave no great resistance. With the aid of his father the boy fixed his little memento safely in its place, and, having done this, he hung upon it a wreath of Alpine flowers which he carried on his arm, and stood looking at the result with a smile on his lips and a tear in his eye.

Colonel Rutland, standing bare-headed at the grave, bent his keen gaze on the face of the child beside him. The death of little Seppi was Squib's first real acquaintance with death (for he had been too little to understand or remember the loss of his baby brother), and it had produced a considerable effect upon the child, as his parents had observed. His presence at the deathbed could not have failed to leave an impression on a mind so thoughtful and sensitive as Squib's; and it had been plain to those about him that the boy had thought of little else ever since his return from the peasant's chalet with news of Seppi's sudden death, and the way in which he had been summoned.

"I think they will know whose doing that is," said the Colonel, and the boy looked up with a smile. Although grave, and sometimes tearful, Squib had not been sorrowful during these intervening days, and there was a look of gladness in his face now as he surveyed his handiwork.

After rather a long silence he broke out in his earnest way,—

“I think they will. I’m sure Ann-Katherin will, because Seppi always told her everything—what we talked about and what we thought about. She will know why I made it a cross, and why I put the lily on.”

“Why did you, my boy?” asked the father gently.

“Well, you see, father, it was like this. We used to talk about things—Seppi and I—and he used to tell me things I didn’t know. You know the people about here are some of them Roman Catholics, and they do things that seem queer to us. They go down on their knees when they pass a cross or a crucifix by the roadside, and Seppi said that Protestants called that wicked, so that they didn’t have any crosses or anything like that in their churches. But I told him we did in England, and he thought it was nice, if it wasn’t wrong; and so we asked Herr Adler about it, and he told us.”

“Told you what?”

“Oh, just made us understand what was right and beautiful and true, without getting wrong things mixed up with it. Herr Adler is *so* nice like that. He loves the Roman Catholics, and calls them brothers, but he knows better than anybody I ever met just where they are wrong, because they go beyond the Bible, and teach things that are not there; and he loves the Protestants, because they made a stand for

the truth and would not have the Bible kept from them, nor have a Pope for the head of the church instead of our Lord ; but he tells us just where they have cut away too much, and left their churches bare and their services too. And so he told us that we were right to love the symbol of the cross (as Seppi did, only he was afraid it was wrong), because St. Paul said that he would glory in it, and our Lord said we were to take up our cross and follow Him. We used to talk about Seppi's lameness. I think that was his cross ; and I knew he would have liked to have one at his grave—though I don't think anybody else would put one there. And you see the lily means that he isn't lame any more—that he has laid down his cross, and that he is in God's garden now—a lily, perhaps, or some beautiful flower, just blooming there with the others, and waiting for the Lord to come. Like his dream."

And then Squib slipped his hand again into his father's, and the pair walked back to the chalet again.

They had plenty of interesting things to talk of. Not only were they going home soon, but everything had been arranged about the Ernsthausers and the piece of ground which Colonel Rutland had bought and made over to them. Everything was practically settled by that time ; and as they passed through the place on their homeward way, Squib was to have the great delight of seeing the site of the proposed hotel, and of being introduced to Seppi's father.

Moor was one of the little party at the grave that day. He had stood with wistful eyes and drooping tail whilst father and son remained there. It seemed almost as if he knew who it was that lay sleeping below ; but he had quite settled down by this time in his new home and with his new master, and Squib had won his father's consent to taking the faithful dog back to England with him.

At first there had been some doubt about this. Both parents had thought the dog would be far happier in his own home, and could not understand Squib's assurances to the contrary ; but when it was demonstrated time after time that, if taken back to the peasant's chalet, the dog would return almost immediately to his new master with every demonstration of joy and affection, Colonel Rutland was fain to admit that some inexplicable bond had been formed between the pair, and he no longer resisted Squib's earnest appeal to be permitted to take the dog home with them. He was not a beautiful animal, but his fidelity and sagacity were beyond dispute. Squib and he were devoted friends, and since poor Czar was no more, one dog was manageable on the homeward journey.

Squib's farewells were all made by this time. The visit to Seppi's grave was the very last. His precious collections of plants and flowers were all packed up by the careful Lisa. His many small gifts and his numerous carvings were stowed away in the great

boxes, all carefully marked for identification. On his last visit to the home of the Ernsthauseens he had been given numbers of Seppi's drawings, and especially, what he greatly valued, the sketch-book, full of those chalk sketches and studies whose progress he had watched with such keen interest. There were several beautiful portraits of Czar in this book, which made it the more valuable, and every picture recalled some incident to the boy's mind, or portrayed some familiar effect of sunshine and snow such as the pair had loved to watch. With that sketch-book in his hands, he would be able to make the brothers and sisters at home understand everything about his life in the valley. Here were the Silent Watchers with their great snow crowns, there the tumbling cascades and watercourses with their many bridges. On one page was a picture of Seppi's home, with Peter digging in the garden, and Ann-Katherin sitting in the doorway with her red handkerchief on her head ; on another, the flock of goats browsing on the hillside with Moor watching them, and Czar lying beside him with his head on his paws. There were studies of some of their favourite Alpine flowers too, such as would be useful to carve from by-and-by, if Squib continued to keep up that accomplishment ; and almost everything Squib most wanted to describe to the girls at home was illustrated in Seppi's book.

There was even a portrait of Herr Adler in his long coat, pointing out to Squib something in the rocks at

their feet. Perhaps the faces were not particularly like, being on so small a scale ; but the general effect was good, and Squib was very glad he had not let Seppi tear out the page on which the hasty sketch had been drawn, as he wished to do, being himself dissatisfied with it.

Squib was ready by this time to go home. Seppi's death had in a great measure broken the tie which had bound his heart to the green valley ; and the thought of all the party at home, the pleasant summer holidays, and the interest and excitement of preparing for school next term, drew his thoughts and interests homewards like a magnet.

The parting with Lisa was the only really hard thing, and that was hard ; for the pair had always been much attached, and the bond had been drawn very close during these long summer weeks.

However, they consoled themselves by promises of writing sometimes. Now that there would be no Seppi to write to, Squib would have lost all news of the valley and of his friends there if Lisa had not promised to keep him informed from time to time. Her home was about midway between this valley and the one in which the Ernsthausens were to set up in the spring in their new hotel. She would be sure to hear and see something of them from time to time, and would let her " Liebchen " know.

Squib was permitted to spend a part of his money in the purchase of a silver watch for Lisa, which he

gave to her on the morning of departure. Her wonder and delight helped them to get through the good-byes wonderfully well, and it was rather a relief at the last to be actually on their homeward way again.

The first stages were taken slowly, and by the evening of the first day the party only got as far as the place where Ernsthausen stayed during the summer months. Here they remained for the night, and Colonel Rutland hired a light carriage and drove Squib out in the evening to see the spot where the hotel was to be built. As they approached it they saw several peasants standing about and looking with great interest at what was going on, and Colonel Rutland remarked with a smile,—

“Ah, here is my friend Ernsthausen himself, measuring the level ground, and seeing how best to pitch his building. We will go and speak to him.”

This was all very interesting, and Squib highly enjoyed the encounter. He did not know which to admire most—the gratitude and dignity of the fine Swiss mountaineer, who now knew to whom he was indebted for this piece of good fortune; or the pleasant, kindly manner of his father in first accepting, then quietly putting aside the thanks, going into all the calculations and measurements, dropping a hint here and making a suggestion there, always to the point, and always eagerly listened to by those standing by.

“I am so glad we went,” cried Squib, as they got into the carriage at last, followed by something very

like a cheer from the peasants. "What a nice place it will be when it is done! Father, do you think you will ever bring me here again?"

Colonel Rutland looked down at his small son, and seeing the eagerness in the boy's eyes, answered after a little thought—

"Well, Squib, suppose we make a compact. You are going to school, and for the next few years you will be busy and full of other interests—interests which you cannot understand yet, but which will absorb you immensely by-and-by. In the holidays you will want to be at home with your brothers and sisters, and they will want you. But our compact shall be this, Squib, that if you are an industrious boy at school, if you do well there—do your best, I mean—and give satisfaction to your masters, then when the time comes for you to leave—the time when there is a break in a boy's life, and often rather an unwelcome one—then I will take you or send you to Switzerland once more for a couple of months; and you shall do some mountaineering with Ernsthause, provided you are strong enough, and he is here to take care of you."

Squib's eyes had been growing brighter and brighter during the course of this speech. Now, after turning the delightful proposition over and over in his mind for several minutes, he said,—

"Oh, father, you *are* kind to me! I will be good and diligent. I meant to before, but I shall never forget now. I told Seppi I didn't know if I should

ever come again, not till I was quite grown up and could do as I liked. But now I shall always have this to look forward to! Oh, I am so much obliged to you!"

Colonel Rutland patted his son's head as he replied,—

"Being grown up, and doing as one likes in your sense of the word, my little man, by no means always go together. When we look back at our boyhood, we fancy it was then that we did as we liked, not now. The fetters of life are much heavier as we go on than they are at starting, as you will find for yourself one of these days."

Squib gave a quick upward glance at his father's face, then turned matters over and over in his mind for a long while, after which he broke out in his vehement way,—

"I know what you mean, father—at least I think I do. But I mean to like everything I have to do, which is better than just doing as one likes. You know that's what Herr Adler does, and he's always happy. I don't know what he does do, but it's hard work, because Seppi says so; and yet he says it is beautiful work, because he loves it so. He says everything can be beautiful if it is done right—done the best way—done," here Squib dropped his voice to a whisper and added, "to the glory of God. Seppi found it out. He said it was beautiful work to keep the goats on the mountains, though at first it seemed so dull. I'm going to try that way of doing every-

thing and looking at everything. Then I shall always do as I like, because I shall always like what I do."

The Colonel bent an earnest look at the child and said,—

"Well, Squib, if coming to Switzerland has taught you that lesson, I don't think your journey has been in vain."

Going home was very interesting, Squib thought, though perhaps not quite so exciting as going out, when everything had the charm of novelty. He understood things better now, and could explain them all to Moor, who was very much perplexed by some of his experiences, especially his first introduction to trains, and his first sight of a large town and paved streets. He was so afraid of being lost that he would not leave Squib's side for a single second, and had to be permitted to sleep at his bed's foot at night. This dependence formed a very strong bond between the dog and the child; and before they reached England, Squib felt as if he must have had Moor all his life, and his grief for the loss of Czar was very much lessened. There would have been a great blank in his life if he had had no canine companion especially his own; but Moor was more his own even than Czar had been, and, being so much smaller in size, could come much more indoors with him at home. His only trouble in prospect was the thought which sometimes presented itself—"What will he do when I go to school?" But Squib

had always possessed a fund of philosophy of his own, and would answer to himself, " Better wait and see what happens before bothering. Perhaps he will get fond of them all at home, and will not miss me more than Czar would have done. Everybody at home will be fond of Moor for being such a good dog. He must learn to do without me sometimes. He will have all the girls to love him."

And so Squib would not be troubled by the future, but enjoyed the present very much, sitting in the corner of a railway carriage, whilst Moor squeezed up beside him next the window, eagerly watching the flying landscape, his ears very tightly pricked, his brown eyes full of light, but quite content even amidst all this unwonted bustle and confusion so long as he and his master were together. There was less trouble with him than with Czar in travelling, on account of his smaller size.

Squib occupied his leisure moments in trying to teach him English, as he was afraid things would be very strange for him at the Chase if he did not know any English words. He soon reached the conclusion that Moor had a " natural gift for languages," for he soon obeyed words of command as readily in French or in English as in his native tongue.

" I wonder if he will be sea-sick ! " thought Squib, as he led him on board the packet. " Poor Czar was, but perhaps Moor will be a better sailor. In people, one can never tell."

Apparently Moor was a better sailor than Czar, for the slight motion of the boat did not seem to affect him at all, and he presently grew so much at home that at last he left his little master's side and wandered about on his own account.

Presently Squib heard a short sharp bark, such as Moor was wont to give when anything pleased him, and that roused the boy, who was leaning over the ship's side thinking about the home he was rapidly approaching, and he went to see what had excited his companion. There were a good many passengers on board that day, and Moor's bark came from some distance off, for Squib was right up in the prow, watching the sharp point cut through the waves and throw back two great flashing scimitars of shining water as it tore its way along, and the sound came from the hinder part of the packet.

Suddenly he came in view of Moor, triumphantly holding by the corner of a gentleman's long coat, and drawing him along with him; and a quick flush rose in Squib's face as he exclaimed joyfully,—

“Herr Adler!”

“My little friend the firework,” said Herr Adler, in his kind way, holding out a hand and drawing the boy to him. “Squib with Seppi’s dog! I could scarcely believe my eyes when Moor came and claimed acquaintance. Have you got Seppi somewhere here? or how come you to have his dog?”

“Seppi is dead,” answered Squib gravely, “and he

asked me when he was dying to have Moor, and father said I might ;” and then Squib launched out into the history of the last weeks of his stay at the chalet, and Herr Adler listened with undivided attention and sympathy, just putting in a word here and there, “saying some of his nice things that leave you feeling happy afterwards,” as Squib expressed it to his mother, but leaving the greater part of the talk in the hands of the child.

It was a great satisfaction to Squib to have this talk.

“ Seppi would have liked you to know everything, I’m sure,” he said in conclusion, “ because it was you who helped him so when he was lame first. Isn’t it funny we should both be crossing in the same boat ? It seems like a beautiful thing to me. I think beautiful things do happen to you, Herr Adler.”

“ I think they happen to all of us, my little friend, if we have eyes to see and hearts to understand.”

Squib looked up eagerly into the kind face and said,—

“ Oh, I think they do ! I do indeed ! Everything seems beautiful to me, I mean about going to Switzerland and finding Seppi, and being his friend, and meeting you and everything. I wonder whether it will go on being like that always ! Do you think it will, Herr Adler ? ”

He was smiling in the way Squib remembered so well—the way that always drew the children’s eyes to his face in eager anticipation of his next words.

"I hope it will, my child," he said. "There is nothing to stop it, unless we raise obstacles ourselves. Sad things may happen to us, but, as you have found already, sad things can be beautiful things too. Everything that comes to us from God has a beautiful side, if we can but find it; and with what is evil, and comes not from Him, we must have nothing to do. And the most beautiful thing of all is surely coming, and may come any day. We must always live in that hope, and then everything about us is beautiful."

Squib did not entirely comprehend what those last words meant, but that did not matter. Children do not ask to comprehend all they hear; it is enough that they apprehend something beyond their ken which lifts their hearts upwards. The pair sat side by side for some minutes in silence, and then the boy said with a sigh of contentment,—

"I am so glad I have seen you again. Now will you come and see my mother? I am sure she would like it."

After that there was no more private talk between Squib and his friend, but he kept by Herr Adler's side, and enjoyed hearing him talk with his parents and uncle. They all liked him so much—Squib was quite proud of the fact. Everybody loved Herr Adler who came across him. As Squib expressed it, "They just couldn't help it!"

"Well, good-bye, my little friend," said Herr Adler at last, as the boat was slowly steaming within the

great stone crescent that guarded the harbour ; “ perhaps some day we may meet again ; but whether or not we do here, we shall meet one day, and know each other again. Be a good boy, and never forget whose child you are. A very happy home-returning to you ! What a clamour there will be when they all come out to meet you—brothers and sisters, and horses and dogs ! I should like to be there to see ! ”

“ Oh, do come, sir ! ” cried Squib eagerly. “ I’m sure they would all so like it ! ”

But Herr Adler shook his head, though he was smiling all the time.

“ Thank you, my little man, but those pleasant things cannot be. Good-bye, my child. You must go to your parents now.”

The boat had come to a standstill, the great engine had ceased to throb. There began to be a movement amongst the passengers. Squib knew that he must not linger now. Although he was growing to be a big boy, and was not much in the way of kissing now, he suddenly lifted his face to Herr Adler’s and received a kiss from him.

The next minute his friend had passed across the narrow gangway, and was with the crowd on the shore. Squib waved his hand to him once, and then turned quickly back, joining his father and mother almost before they had had time to miss him.

“ I was just saying good-bye to Herr Adler,” he said. “ I’m so glad we met him again ! ”

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCLUSION.

SQUIB was on the box-seat of the carriage, squeezed in between coachman and footman. His eyes were bright with excitement ; his flood of eager questions, which had not ceased to be poured out since leaving the station, now ceased suddenly—for there was the house rising up before his eyes ; here was the inner gate dividing garden from park ; and there was the great hall door standing open wide, a flood of bright lamplight pouring out into the warm dusk of the summer night.

It was eight o'clock by this time, and the sun had dipped behind the hill (Squib could not quite make out what had happened to that hill ; it always used to be so high, and now it looked so funny and low), but there was still a warm red glow all over the western sky, though the shadows were darkening, and the dusk was creeping on. It was almost August by this time, and the longest days had come and gone since Squib had been at home.

“ There they are !—there they are ! ” cried Squib,



"Squib's brothers and sisters rejoiced over the pretty gifts he had brought them."

jumping up and down upon the box in his excitement.
“I can see them out on the steps ! Oh, how nice it is, getting home ! I thought going away was the nicest ; but I do think coming back is better !”

In another minute the carriage had dashed up to the door, and there arose a chorus of voices.

“Squib !—Squib !—Father !—Mother ! O mother, how glad we are to have you back !—Squib ! Squib !” and from the twins, allowed on this evening of all evenings to sit up for mother’s kiss, a little echo in their high-pitched, baby voices—“Kwib !—Kwib !”

Squib was off the box before the carriage had stopped, and was immediately the centre of a bevy of sisters, all trying to hug him together. He might be the odd one of the family, with no special comrade of his own ; but the sisters found they had missed him terribly all these weeks, and were delighted to have him back once more. The big brothers from school did not fill the niche which Squib always occupied ; and now they had got him back, it seemed as if they did not know how to make enough of him. Norman and Frank slapped him on the back, and looked with a certain respect at one who had seen so much that was strange to them. The babies put their fingers into their mouths, and gazed at him with solemn admiration. They were just a little bit shy of the parents they had not seen for almost three months, but they were not shy of Squib, and kept very close to him, till at last, in the midst of the

tumult of greetings and questions going on in the big hall, they pulled hard at his hands, and pointing to a corner of the place where a great chair stood, said in eager whispers,—

“ Who’s that, Kwib ? ”

Squib looked and saw poor Moor. Perplexed by the hubbub and tumult, which he somehow felt to be different in kind from any former experience he had been through, and rather alarmed by the number of people, and the presence of a couple of house-dogs, jumping up upon everybody in joyous excitement, he had taken himself off to this obscure corner, and had effaced himself as far as he could beneath the chair, waiting till his little master should have leisure to notice him again, and tell him what he was to do.

“ That’s Moor,” answered Squib eagerly ; “ come and talk to him, and make him feel at home. He’s *such* a nice dog ! Seppi gave him to me. I’ll tell you all about Seppi some day when we have time. But come and see Moor now. I’m sure he’ll like it. He likes being loved.”

“ Where’s poor Czar ? ” asked Hilda, as they went across the hall willingly with Squib.

“ He’s dead,” answered Squib sadly. “ Didn’t you know ? ”

The twins had heard that something tragic had happened to Czar, but were not quite sure of its nature. They had rather feared the huge dog, and did

not personally regret him, though always sorrowful for anything that other people thought sad.

"Won't he ever come back again?" asked Hulda; and Squib shook his head.

"No, he's buried in Switzerland; I'll show you a picture of his grave. I've brought Moor home instead. Father said I might."

Moor by this time had advanced a few yards from his retreat, and was wagging all over, as dogs have a talent for doing when rather forlorn or shy, but anxious above all things to propitiate.

Hilda and Hulda, who had grown up amongst animals, and loved them dearly, were on their knees beside him in a moment, calling him by all sorts of endearing names, and receiving his grateful and affectionate kisses with great joy. As for Moor, he did not know how to show his affection enough. He squirmed and wriggled, and thumped his tail upon the parquetrie floor, and fawned first upon one little girl and then upon the other. They ran to the dining-room and got him biscuits; and were wonderfully taken by the little tricks he did for them, and, above all, by his comprehension of another language, when Squib gave the words of command in his own home-patois.

"Oh, isn't he a clever doggie! Oh, isn't he a dear doggie!" they cried again and again, interrupting proceedings by their eager kisses and caresses. "Oh, may we have him in the nursery when you don't

want him, Kwib dear? We never had a nursery dog—and he is such a dear one! Oh, good Moor!—nice Moor! Oh, isn't he kind and gentle! I think he's much nicer than Czar; but then Czar wasn't nice to us as he was to you, Kwib."

The delight of the children was great. They could hardly tear themselves away from the new pet, till a message came that they were to say good-night to father and mother, and go to bed.

"May Moor come with us?" they asked, and Squib gladly consented, for he was afraid Nip and Koko might not be very friendly to a stranger the first night, though they would be certain to make friends later on.

"Kwib's brought home *such* a nice doggie!" they cried, as they pressed up to say good-night; "and he's coming with us now, 'cause he feels rather strange just at first."

"That is right, darlings," answered the mother. "Make him happy, and give him a nice supper; for he's a very good doggie, and very fond of little people"—and the twins trotted off hand-in-hand perfectly happy, with Moor snuggling in between them, very willing to do anything that was desired of him when Squib had explained that he would come too by-and-by.

So Squib sat at table with the elders that evening, at a meal that was something like dinner and tea and supper all rolled into one. He sat at a corner,

between Mary and Philippa, and poured a perfect broadside of information into their willing ears as he ate. As for them, they listened greedily, and piled his plate with every kind of delicacy. It *was* nice to be home again, Squib thought, although he had enjoyed himself so much away. It was nice to find out how very kind his sisters were. He felt he had not quite appreciated them before. They were so glad to have him back, and made so much of him, although he was younger than they, and they wanted to know everything that he had to tell them.

But it was getting late to-night ; and mother by-and-by told him he must run off to bed, and finish his stories to-morrow. Squib felt that it would take a great many to-morrows before all was told ; but when he came to think of it, he found that he *was* rather sleepy, and he did want to see how his own little iron bedstead would look after the funny wooden ones he had slept on all these weeks.

His bedroom was in the nursery wing, and he had to pass his little sisters' door before he reached his own. As he softly stepped along the matted corridor, he heard the soft flopping of a tail against the boards, and found Moor stretched out upon the mat just outside the night-nursery.

“Good dog ! good Moor !” he said, pausing to pat him. “Yes, take care of the little mistresses all night. Good dog ! good old fellow !”

The sound of his voice attracted the attention of

nurse, who came out of the day-nursery with a beaming face.

"Master Squib, my dear, how well you look, and how brown! and I declare if you haven't grown, too! Well, we shall all be glad to see you back, I am sure. The young ladies have missed you sadly since you went. But there, there, as I tell them, they'll have to get used to it, seeing that you are just going off to school."

"But it's nice of them to miss me—I didn't think they would," said Squib, holding nurse's hand and looking up into her face, and thinking how nice and kind it was. "Oh, nurse, Lisa sent her love to you, and such a lot of messages. I've got something in my box that she knitted for you, too. I've got *such* a lot of things to unpack to-morrow. I've brought such a heap of things home. And Moor has come instead of Czar. I'm dreadfully sorry poor Czar is dead; but I think the children will like Moor better. And he is our very own; and we may have him in the nursery, mother says."

Squib looked up under his eyebrows at nurse as he spoke, for he was not quite sure how she would take to the idea of a nursery dog—she had never favoured Czar's presence there; but she was looking quite smiling and pleasant, and even put out a hand to stroke Moor, who had come up at the sound of his name, and seemed to desire to propitiate the presiding authority of these regions.

" Well, he seems a nice, faithful, attached creature, and Miss Hilda and Miss Hulda are so set on animals, there's no keeping them away. If your mother does not mind having the dog up here, and he'll be clean and quiet, I don't say but he might be useful in his way. It's a long way from here to the kitchens when I'm at supper, and now you'll be so much away, Master Squib, I confess I haven't always been quite comfortable to think of leaving them all alone, in the dark days, so far from everybody. But a nice, sensible dog up here beside their door would make me quite happy. And he seems wonderful understanding with children—as though he was used to them. I've taken rather a fancy to him myself, I own; though I never liked that big Russian fellow. I never felt that he mightn't turn upon them if they teased him; and he'd soon have made an end of a child if he'd been angry."

" He never turned on anybody when I was with him," said Squib; " though I know people called him fierce. But Moor is very good and gentle. You should have seen how he took care of Seppi."

And then Squib went to his room, nurse coming with him to help him to unpack a few things that he was anxious about, and to get to bed; and whilst she did this he told her the story of little Seppi, and how good and faithful Moor had always been. So that nurse was quite reconciled to the idea of a nursery dog, and Moor slept contentedly at the night-nursery

door, with his eyes (when he was awake) on that of his little master's room.

How exciting it was, waking up the next morning, to find himself really at home !

Squib leaped out of bed the moment he thoroughly realized this, and began dressing in great haste, without even looking at his precious watch. When he did look at it at last, he found it was only six o'clock.

"But never mind," he said to himself ; "I shall have all the more time to see everything."

Moor jumped eagerly up when his master appeared, and was delighted to accompany him out of doors.

"Things have a different smell here," was Squib's first thought as he let himself out into the fresh, morning air ; "I should know I wasn't in Switzerland by that. I wonder if Moor notices the difference."

Moor was at any rate immensely interested in this place, which Squib was careful to explain to him was his home now. He raced hither and thither, with his nose to the ground, and sniffed eagerly at everything.

Squib's first journey was to the paddock where Charger was generally to be found when he was turned out. The nights had been so warm that he did not think he would have been taken in for shelter ; and when he neared the place, sure enough there was Charger quietly cropping the dewy grass, and flicking off the flies with his tail ; but as Squib ran forward, calling out his name, he threw up his head, and came trotting up to the fence.

"Good old Charger! nice old horse!" cried Squib, caressing the soft nose and feeding his favourite with lumps of sugar from his pocket. He had brought home some of the funny French sugar on purpose for Charger, and very much the good horse seemed to like it.

"May I have a ride, Charger?" he asked, and Charger arched his neck and gave an answering whinny, and the next minute Squib mounted the iron railing, and made a quick spring upon the broad back of his friend. In a moment he was firmly seated with his hands in the thick mane of the horse, and Charger set out on a little canter round and round his paddock, whilst Moor careered after him in wild excitement, this being quite a new experience for him.

"You will often run with Charger now," Squib explained to him as he rolled himself off: the horse and dog made mutual acquaintance by gently sniffing at each other, and from that moment they were friends. Moor was often afterwards to be seen trotting off to see Charger either in paddock or in stable, as the case might be. Sometimes he would jump into the empty manger, and sit an hour there holding silent converse with him. It soon became recognized throughout the household that Moor was a "character," and he was accorded the liberty and consideration which such individuals usually earn. Everybody liked him, and all were pleased when he singled them out for notice; but he was reserved in the main, and kept

the wealth of his affections for his own master and the little twin girls.

To them he was intensely devoted, and nurse soon found that he could be quite useful to her in taking charge of the little ones, either in the garden or even on the roads, if she had an errand to do and did not wish them to come into the cottage where she might have to go. With Moor to take care of them they were perfectly safe; for he would not allow a stranger to approach or address them, nor would he permit them to get into mischief, or to wander away from him or from one another. He treated them as he had been used to treat a straying goat, running round and barking at them, and keeping them together and in the right place; and his antics were always so entertaining to the little ones, that they were kept quite amused and happy till nurse returned to them.

So Moor won for himself a place in the household; and by the time that Squib had to go to school, he was able to say philosophically to himself, "Well, it was just a good thing I didn't worry about leaving Moor behind. He'll miss me, of course; but he's got Hilda and Hulda and Charger to be fond of. He won't pine a bit. He's much too sensible; and I shall tell him that I shall come back. He'll quite understand. It's not a bit of good to worry over things beforehand. They come much righter if one is just sensible and lets them alone!"

But all that was much later of course. School still

seemed distant when Squib returned home to find himself something of a hero.

He was a greater hero than ever when the boxes were unpacked, and tray after tray of odds and ends, incalculably precious to children, were carried into the nursery to be distributed and explained.

Oh, how the brothers and sisters did rejoice over the pretty little gifts their brother had brought for them, and almost more over the quantities of little things he had carved himself! Really, when all these were collected together there was a goodly array. There was something for everybody in the house, and for all the men in the yard too. And even when all these were arranged for, there were quantities left, and the nursery and the girls' rooms were filled with trifles that little people love to collect about them—goats and dogs, and horses and chalets, and paper knives, trays, and little boxes. Not only were there all Squib's carvings, but numbers of Seppi's too; for Frau Ernsthausen had given Squib a box of these at the last, which he had not opened till he got home; and now it was found to contain all manner of pretty little trifles such as Swiss boys so often make in the winter months; and Seppi's work was always good, he took such pains with it.

Squib was thought a most wonderful traveller as he produced these stores, with a perfect flood of reminiscences and anecdotes in connection with them. Breathlessly was the history of his acquaintance with

Seppi listened to, and tears stood in the sisters' eyes as the pathetic little story was told.

As for Moor, he was loved even more when it was told how good and faithful he had been ; how he had acted like a sort of crutch to Seppi ; and above all, how he had come all that way across the valley and found his way to the chalet to summon Squib to the side of his dying master. Squib always told that part of the story with a certain awe ; for he felt that something beyond mere instinct had guided the creature's steps, and he scarcely knew how to give expression to the ideas which this thought suggested.

But as the days flew by, and the first excitement of Squib's return died a natural death, there was still one favourite pastime that never failed the children, but which seemed to grow more and more fascinating with familiarity. And this was to get Squib to produce Seppi's sketch-book, and sitting all together in a cluster on the broad, low nursery window seat, to turn the pages slowly over, and make Squib tell the story of every picture.

Amongst so many favourites it was hard to say which was first, but perhaps it was the sketch of Czar's grave ; for that always elicited the story of the terrible thunder-storm amongst the mountains, to which the sisters would listen with the most breathless interest. The drawings of the snow-peaks and the Silent Watchers had a great fascination also, and Squib would tell the legends of the peasantry about

the Bergmännlein and the Seligen Fräulein. But at the end he would always add,—

“But that’s all make-up, you know. It isn’t true. It’s not like the stories Herr Adler tells.”

As for Herr Adler’s stories, they were a perfect mine of wealth to the children. When for any reason Squib failed to remember any fresh adventure of his own to relate, Hilda or Hulda would quickly turn the pages till they came to the one which represented Herr Adler in his long coat pointing something out to Squib with the end of his stick, and then they would all cry out in a breath,—

“Never mind, Squib; tell us one of Herr Adler’s stories. His are the nicest after all!”

So Herr Adler became a household word in that nursery, and in future, if Squib caught himself in the act of being slovenly, selfish, disobedient, or wasteful, he would pull himself up shortly on remembering how he had been taught always to give his best, always to try after the highest, to make his life a beautiful thing, and to find everything round him beautiful, as no one can ever do who is not struggling with his faults, and seeking to follow in the footsteps of One who pleased not Himself.

Then he soon found that when there was discord in the nursery or schoolroom, and voices were raised in grumbling, or fault-finding, or scolding, and he suddenly said,—“I don’t know what Herr Adler *would* say to us if he saw us now!” it generally

produced a sudden lull, and they would all look at each other and begin to wonder how the quarrel had commenced.

“I wish Herr Adler would come and see *us* some day,” said Philippa once, when there had been a good many breezes through the house, and the children had at last made peace, and agreed that there had been nothing to quarrel about, but that they were just naughty and silly; “I think he would make us all good.”

Squib was squatting on the window-seat looking out over the park, and wondering why he was cross with his sisters, of whom he was so fond, when he had hardly ever felt cross all the time he had been in Switzerland.

“He wouldn’t like you to say that,” he answered quickly.

“Why not? I thought you said he always did make you feel good.”

“So he does,” answered Squib, wrinkling up his brow in the effort to formulate the thought in his brain, but failing to find adequate words in which to express it. After some moments of silence he broke out in his squib-like way: “Yes, I just wish he *would* come, and then you would understand. I can’t make you, because you’ve never seen anybody like him. I think”—with a flash of sudden inspiration—“it’s because he’s a man of God. That’s what Seppi said, and I’m sure he’s right. You just feel that all the

time he's talking. And that's what makes everything about him just what it is."

After which very lucid statement Squib subsided into silence.

But I think the sisters understood him, in spite of the difficulty of expression, because children, and especially brothers and sisters, have a wonderful gift of reading each others' hearts and minds by a species of intuition ; and after a little pause of silence, Mary said thoughtfully,—

"I think I know what you mean, Squib dear. We oughtn't to think just whether this person or that person would be pleased by what we do, although, of course, we must try to please our parents ; but we must try most to please God ; and He always sees us and knows what we are saying and doing. That's what you mean, isn't it ?"

Squib nodded with some vehemence, but answered nothing, and the subject dropped ; yet the children did not forget, and even the little twins would sometimes say to each other in whispers,—

"We shouldn't do that if we knew Herr Adler could see us—but God always sees. We mustn't do anything He would mind."

Now after that journey to Switzerland, Squib no longer found himself the odd one of the family. His brothers recognized qualities and experiences in him which made them willing to patronize him and make a comrade of him in many things ; whilst the sisters

found him always an addition to their party, and always had a welcome for him. Moor was a great bond at first—Moor and the picture-book and the stories—and the bond once formed was never loosened, but grew stronger and stronger, even though Squib had to go to school and pass months away from them all.

But that is the way of the world, and boys and girls make light of it, provided they still have happy holidays together, which they certainly do at Rutland Chase. Squib is still looking eagerly forward to the day when he will finish his school life and claim the promised reward. He is very happy at school, to be sure, but what boy ever did fail to look beyond? and Squib's retentive memory and Lisa's half-yearly letters all serve to keep that purpose alive in him.

The mountaineer's hotel in the valley is growing and flourishing. The Ernsthausens are substantial people and have paid off the last of the debt. And Squib still talks grandly to his little sisters of the day when he will go to that hotel and climb all the great mountain peaks under the escort of Seppi's father.

THE END.



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